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# A HISTORY OF SIAM

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE  
YEAR A.D. 1781, WITH A SUPPLEMENT  
DEALING WITH MORE RECENT EVENTS

By W. A. R. WOOD, C.M.G., C.I.E.,  
Late H. B. M. Consul-General, Chiengmai.





## PREFACE

to the original edition.

This book is the first attempt which has ever been made to compile, in a European language, a history of Siam, from the earliest times down to a comparatively modern period. My intention in writing it was to provide a handy book of reference for Europeans who are unacquainted with the main facts of Siamese history, and have no time or desire to delve them out for themselves from among a mass of contradictory documents.

I have tried to relate rather than to dilate, and have not, I hope, obtruded my own opinions to an unreasonable extent. I am aware that I shall be accused of showing a pro-Siamese bias in many parts of this book. I may as well, therefore, at once plead guilty to this charge. I have written as a friend of Siam and the Siamese, among whom I have spent the best years of my life.

It will, I think, be frankly admitted that the Siamese have some right to feel a pride in the history of their country. It is the story of a collection of more or less uncultivated immigrants from Southern China, who settled in the country now known as Siam, overcoming a mighty Empire, and establishing a number of free States, which became finally fused into the Siam of to-day. We see them humbled to the dust again and again by a more powerful neighbour, yet always rising up and regaining their freedom. A hundred years ago there were dozens of independent States in South-Eastern Asia. To-day there remains but one—Siam. Those who believe in the survival of the fittest will admit that the Siamese, whatever their faults, must possess some special

qualities which have marked them out to maintain this unique position.

People who are interested in fairies, goblins, giants, magic talismans, and the like will not find much to please them in this book. There are plenty of supernatural beings and events to be met with in native histories, but I have preferred, even at the sacrifice of picturesqueness, to stick to prosaic facts.

My original intention was to bring my work to an end with the accession of the first king of the dynasty now reigning. For the sake of convenience I have, however, added a brief Supplement, giving the main events of the history of the kingdom down to the present time. I do not consider myself well qualified to write a detailed history of modern Siam ; if, however, nobody else undertakes the task, I may perhaps attempt it at a later date.

I have received a very great amount of kind assistance, notably from Professor G. Coedès and from Mr. G. E. Harvey, I.C.S. My deepest gratitude is, however, due to His Royal Highness Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, whose researches alone have made it possible for me to undertake this work, and whose help and advice have been of incalculable value.

CHIENGMAI,

*June 30th, 1924.*

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In A.D. 225 General Song Beng defeated the army of Beng Hek, the Tai' Prince of Ailao Kingdom and forced him to submit to the Emperor of Szechuan.





King Kolofeng invaded China and captured thirty-two towns and villages.

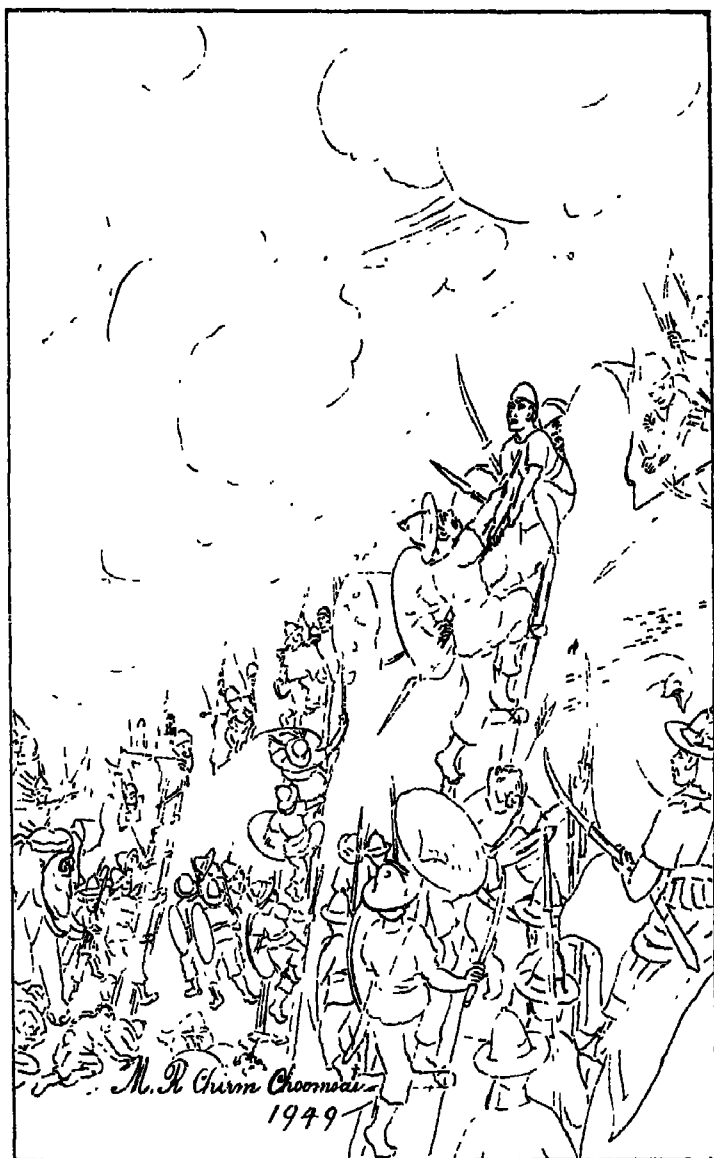


*M. D. K. Chinnai*  
Oct. 12 1949.

King Fa of Nanchao asked a daughter of the Chinese  
Emperor in marriage with his son.



King Anurutha of Pagan took Nak'on Prat'om.



K'un Bang Klang T'ao took the town of Suk'otai, then  
the Northern capital of the Cambodian Empire.



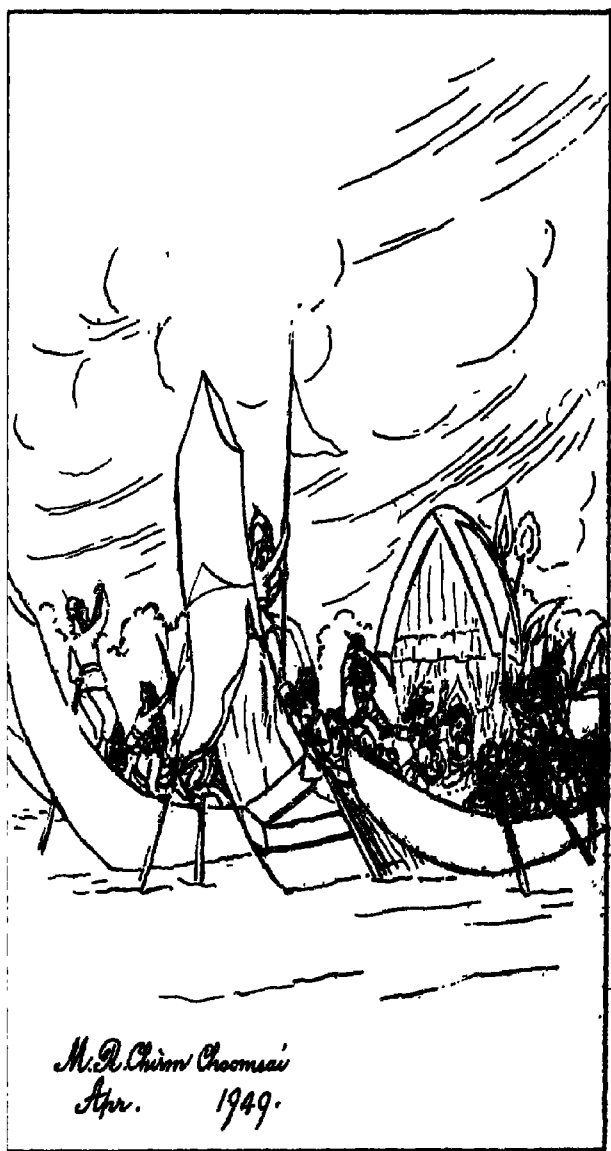
The young Prince Kark'amkeng defeated the Prince of Chot.



King Iaksin organized an army to fight the Burmese.



When Ayuthaya fell to the Burmese the villagers of Bangrachan offered resistance. One of their leaders, Nai Chan Nua K'13, killed Surinta Cho, the Burmese leader who was sent out to suppress them.



K'un P'iren intercepted the barge of K'un Worawongsa and dragged  
the usurper ashore along with Princess Sri Suda Chan, and beheaded them.





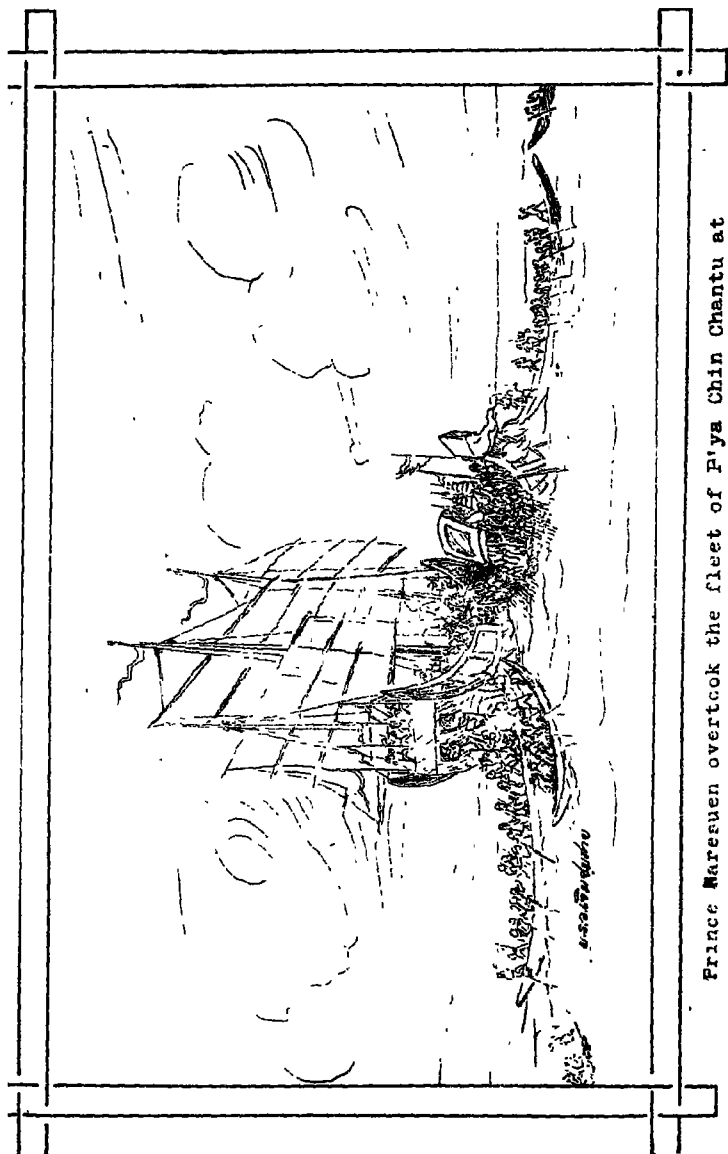
In the year following the fall of Ayut'ia. King Boromaraja  
of Cambodia invaded Siam.



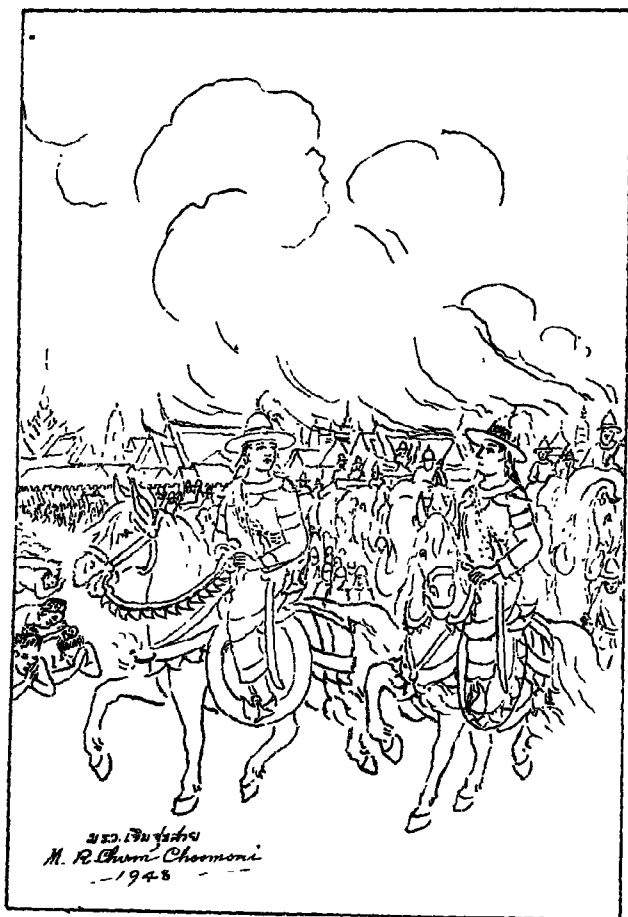
Prince Nareuuen stormed a Burmese camp and killed Lakwaitamu,  
the Gurkha General.



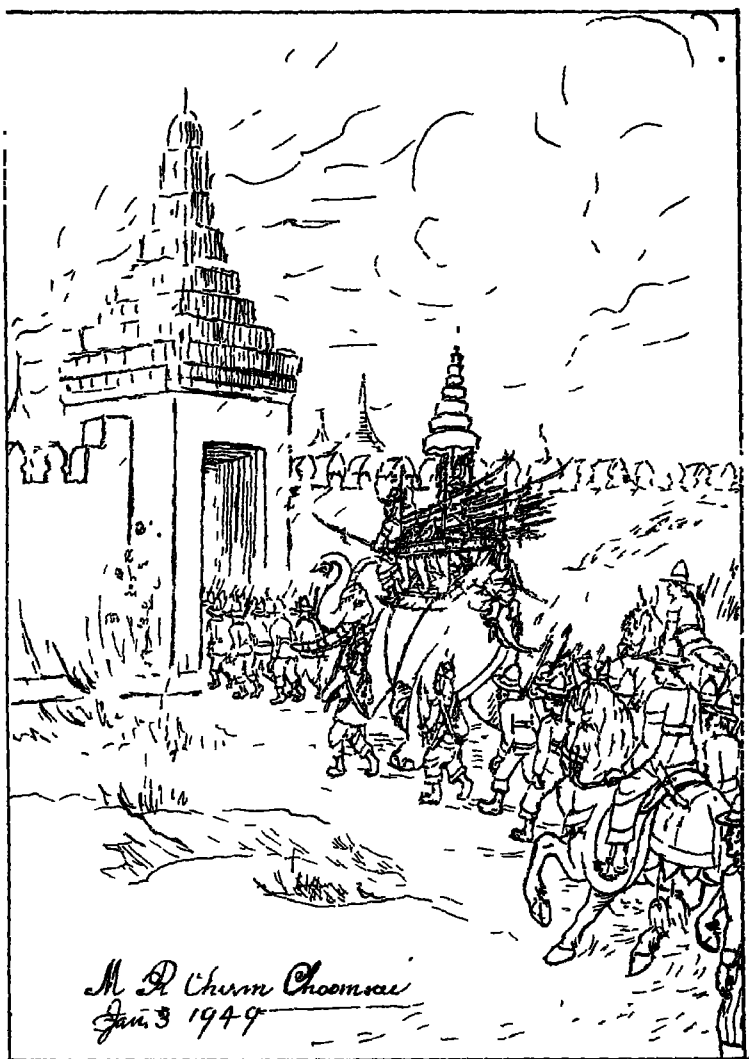
Prince Naresuen led his army to scale the  
fort of the enemy.



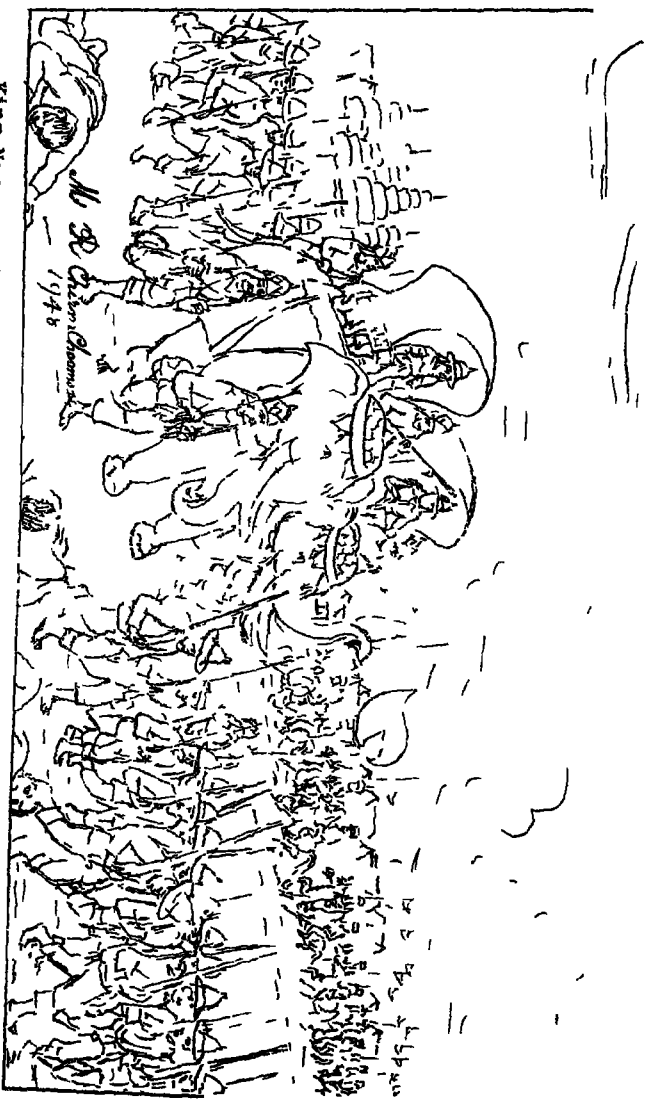
Prince Naresuen overtook the fleet of P'ya Chin Chantu at  
the mouth of the river.



King Naresuen took Lowek, the capital of Cambodia



King Naresuen took Pegu, the capital of Burma.



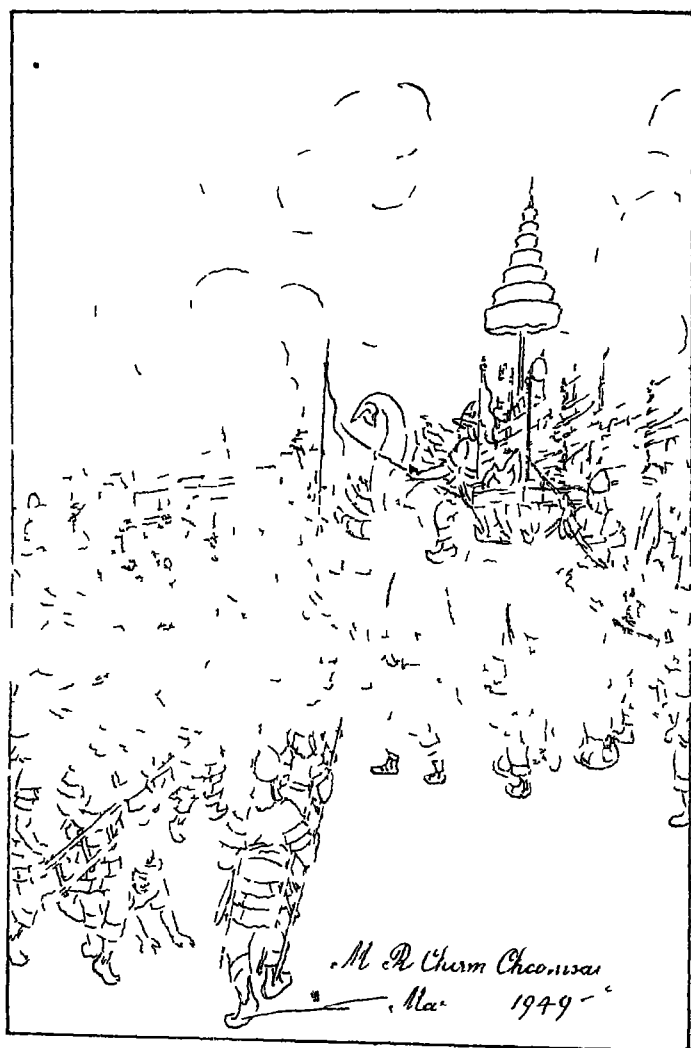
King Nareuen together with his brother, Prince Ekat'otsarot, returned  
from the conquest of Taungu.



*M. A. Chum Chomsai* —  
— Dec. 1948 —

King Naresuen took Chiangmai.

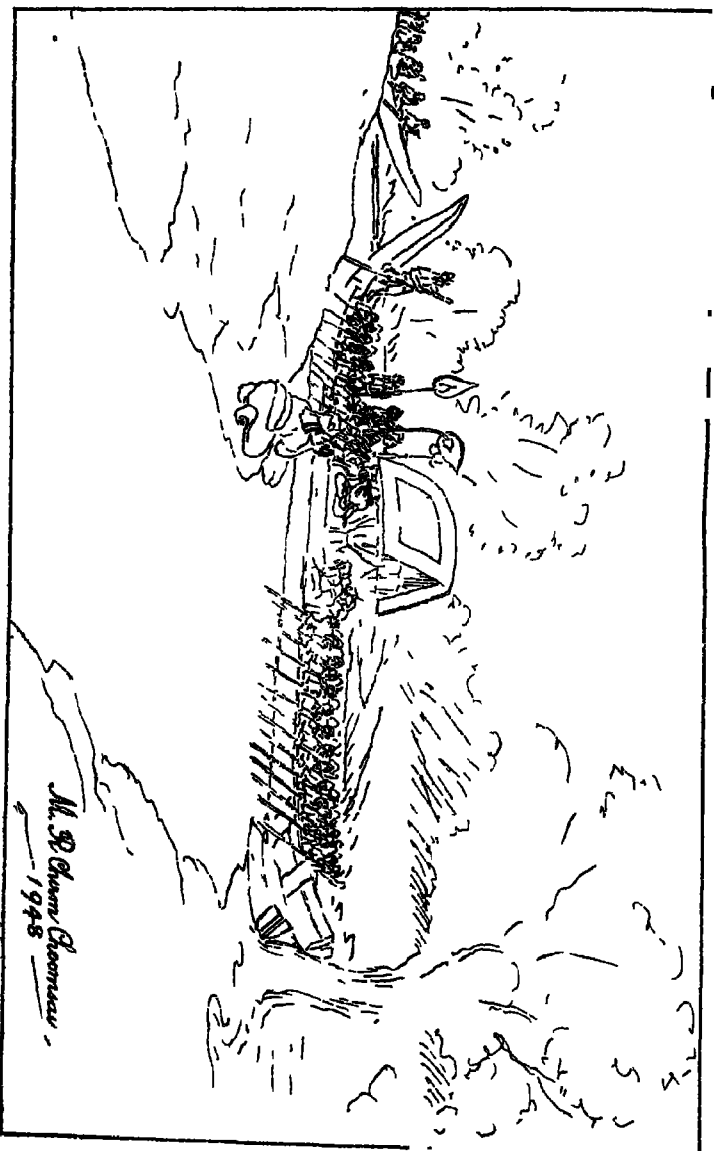




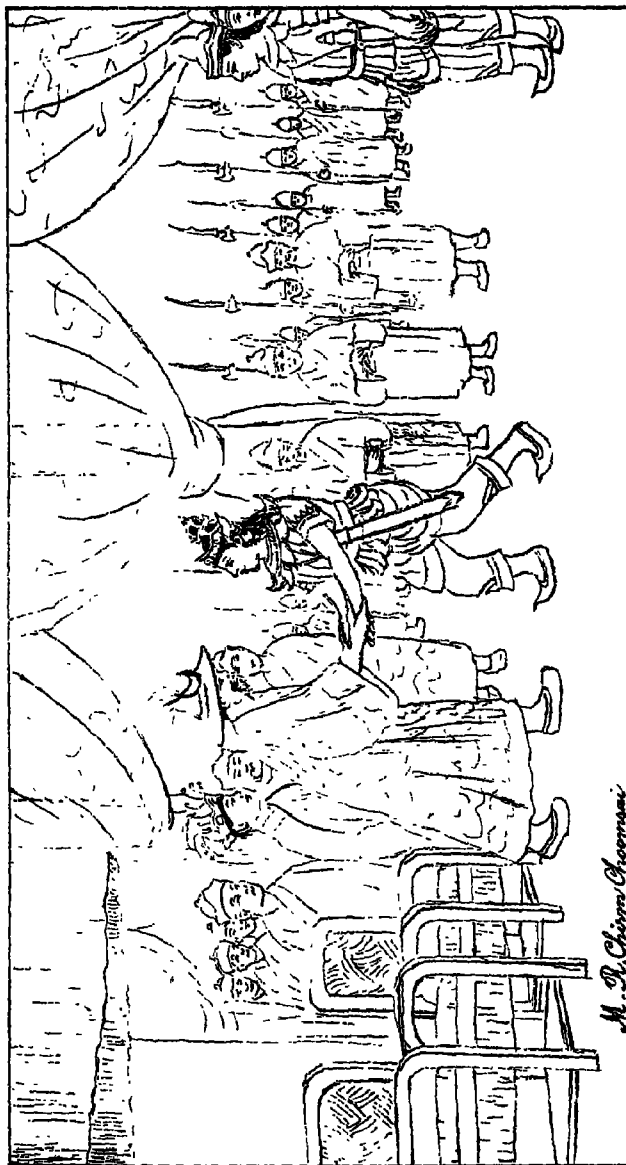
King Varai took Chiengmai in March 1662.



In 1681 King P'tetraja sent out an expedition to capture the rebel town of Korat.



King Tiger and the steersman.



*M. B. Chinn Chommai*  
1948

King Ram'atheng visited Kublai Khan, the Chinese Emperor.



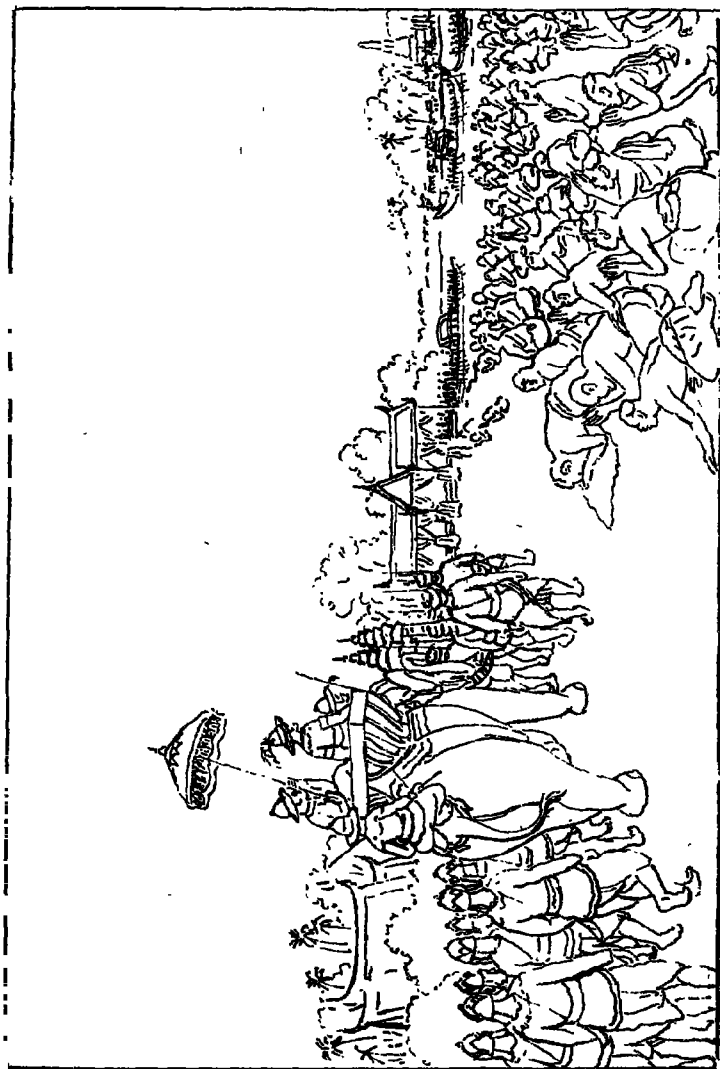
Mogado eloped with one of the daughters of King Ramk'angheng  
and escaped to Martab n.



King Tak led his army against the invading Burmese.

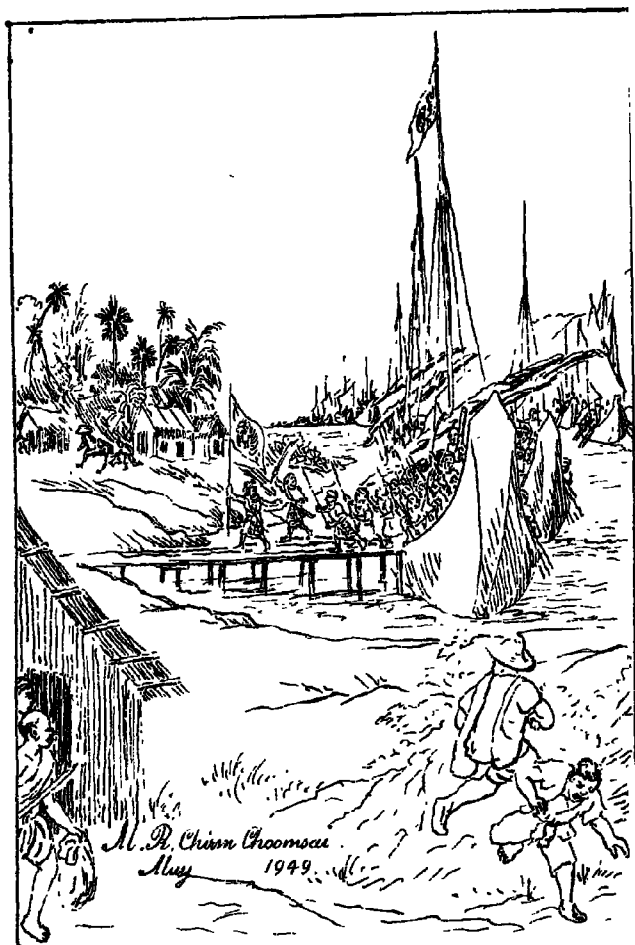


Maha Sihasura, the Burmese General, met Chao P'ya Chakri  
and prophesied that Chao P'ya Chakri was destined to wear a crown.

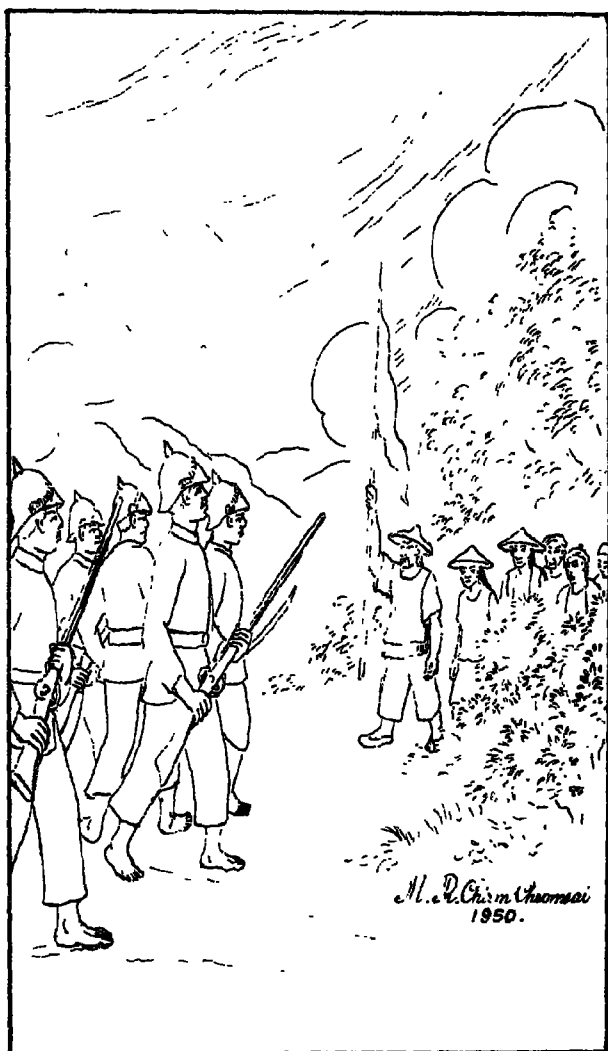


Chao P'ya Chakri arrived back at T'anaburi from his conquests of the North-East.





In 1810 the Burmese General Yiwun attacked the island of Phuket.



During the reign of King Rama V Chamūn Waiworanat was sent to fight against the invading Hōs of Northern Laos.



## INTRODUCTION

The principal difficulty which confronts the writer who tries to compile a history of Siam is the almost entire absence of reliable native chronicles.

The official records and annals of the Kings of Ayut'ia were all destroyed when the Burmese captured that city in 1767. During the reigns of King Taksin and King P'ra P'utt'a Yot Fa Chulalok (Rama I) attempts were made to reconstruct the history of Ayut'ia from such sources as were then available. The result is the *P'ongsawadan*, several versions of which are in existence. Unfortunately, the compilers of the *P'ongsawadan* either destroyed or at least did not preserve, the documents from which they derived their information. Consequently, although it is now possible to say that many of their statements were erroneous, it is not easy to discover how the errors arose, and still less easy to correct them.

The two most widely known versions of the *P'ongsawadan* are the *P'ongsawadan in Two Volumes*, published at Bangkok by Dr. Bradley in 1863, and the "Royal Autograph Edition," which was revised by King Maha Mongkut (Rama-IV) and printed in 1907, with notes by Prince Damrong. There have been several printed editions of both these versions.

The principal difference between these two versions is that the "Royal Autograph Edition" gives a King, Int'araja II, who is said to have reigned from 1449 to

1473. The name of this King does not appear at all in the main text of Bradley's version, though it is given in two brief summaries incorporated by Bradley in his first volume. In the present book this King's name will not be found, as I have followed the version, which will be referred to later, known as "Luang Prasoet's History."

Both the usual versions of the *P'ongsawadan*, that is to say, Bradley's and the "Royal Autograph," are derived from a version drawn up in 1840 by Prince Paramanujit Jinorot, under the orders of King P'ra Nang Klao (Rama III). Prince Paramanujit's work was, in its turn, compiled from two manuscript editions of the *P'ongsawadan*, which are preserved in the National Library at Bangkok. The first of these was written in 1783, under King Taksin, and the second in 1795, under King P'ra P'utt'a Yot Fa Chulalok (Rama I). These two versions, as well as all the printed versions, are, practically speaking, one and the same book.

The chief peculiarity which strikes the student of all these versions of the *P'ongsawadan* is that, starting from about the year 1370, almost every date given is wrong. This can easily be proved by comparing the dates with those given in the annals of neighbouring countries, such as Burma, Luang P'rabang, Chiangmai, and Cambodia, or those recorded by European authors, e.g. Mendez Pinto, P. W. Floris, and J. van Vliet. Moreover, the error is not uniform; sometimes the dates given are wrong only by one or two years, sometimes by eighteen or twenty. The only conclusion to be drawn is that the compilers of the *P'ongsawadan*, for some reason or other, invented a complete system of chronology for themselves, and this does not make us too ready to accept without question their authority

as to facts, especially in cases where their statements are contradicted by the histories of neighbouring countries or by the evidence of contemporary witnesses.

In the year 1905 King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) instituted a new National Library, under the presidency of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince (afterwards King Rama VI), and since that time historical research has been carried out in a scientific and careful manner, and steps have been taken to discover and preserve ancient versions of the history of the country.

The book known as the *P'ongsawadan of Luang Prasoet* was discovered and presented to the National Library in 1907 by an official named Luang Prasoet. It was compiled in 1680, under orders from King Narai. It gives briefly the history of the Kings of Ayut'ia from 1350 to 1605. The earlier part of this book, down to about the year 1500, is similar, in the main, to the usual versions of the *P'ongsawadan*, and the compilers of the latter probably possessed a copy of *Luang Prasoet's P'ongsawadan*. The dates given in Luang Prasoet's book agree, generally speaking, with those given in the native histories of Burma and other neighbouring countries.<sup>1</sup>

There is further evidence of the correctness of the dates given in Luang Prasoet's book. A Pali version of Siamese history,<sup>2</sup> incorporated in a religious work called *Sangitivamsa*, composed in 1789 by a Buddhist priest named Vimaladharmā, gives practically the same series of dates, and another Siamese version, written in 1774- of which only a small fragment has been preserved-

<sup>1</sup> Luang Prasoet's History has been translated into English by the late Dr. Frankfurth, and was published in the *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. vii., part 3 (Bangkok, 1909).

<sup>2</sup> Translated into French by Professor G. Cordès, and published in the *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, vol. xiv., No. 3.

also supports, so far as it goes, Luang Prasert's version.

For these reasons I have, whenever possible, followed Luang Prasert's dates, and have, moreover, accepted his statement of facts whenever this does not coincide with the account given in later editions of the *P'ongsawadan*.

As for the Siamese Kingdom of Suk'ot'ai, no written history of it, if such ever existed, has been preserved, but many facts connected with it can be gleaned from the histories of Burma and of Chiengmai, as well as from various carved inscriptions which have been discovered, notably the celebrated stone of Ling Ram-k'angheng, the earliest known specimen of Tai writing. This stone may be seen in the National Library at Bangkok, and a translation of it was made by Professor Bradley, and published in the *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. vi., part i.

The history of Chiengmai, and of the Lao States generally, is given in the *P'ongsawadan Yonok*, compiled, from various documents, by the late P'ya Prajakit, and published at Bangkok in 1907. It is a most interesting book, and throws a great deal of light upon the history of Siam.

There is also a book called the *Jinakalamalini*, written in the Pali language at Chiengmai in 1516 by a priest named Rat'ana Panyayana. It deals mainly with religious subjects, but contains many details about the early Kings of Chiengmai.'

The above are the principal books of Siamese origin on which I have relied in compiling the present volume. I have also studied Siamese versions of the histories of,

1 A French translation of the *Jinakalamalini*, by Professor G. Coedès, appeared in the "Revue de l'Extrême Orient", vol. xxv. 1925, No 1.

Burma, Luang P'rabang, and Cambodia, as well as Nai T'ien's excellent English translation of the Burmese *Chronicle*, published in various numbers of the Siam Society's *Journal*.

To come to European authorities, the earliest is the *Perigrinations* of Fernando Mendez Pinto. The English translation, by Cogan, published in London in 1663, is rather incorrect, but does not differ, as regards Siam, in any essential respect from the original Portuguese (Lisbon, 1614). Pinto was a most extraordinary romancer. Nevertheless, it is interesting to find a contemporary European account of the death of King P'rajai and the usurpation of K'un Worawongsa, agreeing, in many important particulars, with the version given in the Siamese *P'ongsawadan*.<sup>1</sup>

Jeremias van Vliet is another European writer who deals at length with historical events in Siam. The Flemish original of his book was never printed, but a French translation was published in Paris in 1673, in the same volume as Herbert's *Voyage to India and Persia*. It was written by Van Vliet in 1647, and is entitled *Revolutions arrivées au Royaume de Siam*.

Van Vliet's work, even in the very imperfect French translation, is most valuable, and enables us to reconstruct to a great extent the reigns of King Songt'am and his two sons, which are described very incorrectly in the *P'ongsawadan*.

Van Vliet also wrote another book, the *Description of the Kingdom of Siam*, an excellent English translation of which, by Mr. L. F. van Ravenswaay, was published in the *Journal of the Siam Society* (vol. vii., part i). This book describes Siam in the reign of King Prasat

<sup>1</sup> An abridged version of Pinto's book was published in London 1891.



T'ong, and contains a good deal of useful historical information.

For the reign of Narai there are a great number of European authorities, the best known being La Loubère, Tachard, and the anonymous author of the *Full and True Relation of the Great and Wonderful Revolution that happened in the Kingdom of Siam*, published first in Paris in 1690, and later translated into English and Italian.

Turpin's *History of Siam* was published in Paris in 1771. There is an English translation by B. O. Cartwright (Bangkok, 1909) and an abridged English version is to be found in *Pinkerton's Voyages*. Turpin derived his information from the French missionaries. He does not, to quote his own words, "attempt to lift the veil which conceals the beginnings of this kingdom," but he gives a more or less detailed history of the country from 1550 to 1770. He is a most exasperating writer, as he cites very few dates, and usually refers to his characters in a vague way, giving no names, so that it is often difficult to decide whom or what he is writing about. Nevertheless, he has preserved many interesting facts which cannot be traced elsewhere.

The above are the principal old authorities whom I have consulted, but many facts have been gleaned from other sources, notably from various Records of the English and Dutch India Companies.

Of modern works I must mention two, one English and one Siamese, namely Anderson's *English Intercourse with Siam in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1890) and Prince Damrong's *History of the Wars between Burma and Siam* (Bangkok, 1920). The latter book is a perfect gold-mine of interesting information.

With regard to the system of transliterating Siamese

names and titles used in this book, I trust that it will not be found entirely unsatisfactory. There are two main systems in use in Siam, namely the phonetic, which gives the sound of each word as heard or imagined by the transliterator, and the scientific, which gives the equivalent in Roman characters of the original Pali or Sanscrit pronunciation of the word. The former system, as a rule, utterly disguises the origin of all Pali and Sanscrit words, and the latter completely distorts their modern pronunciation.

As this book will, I hope, be read by many persons who know no Siamese, and by more who know no Sanscrit or Pali, I have thought it best to follow a phonetic system. For the sake of those readers who may be interested in tracing the Pali origin of the names and titles used, I have, however, with the kind assistance of Professor G. Coedès, added a list, in which the Pali forms are set forth.

There are two main classes of Siamese guttural, labial, and dental consonants, namely the unaspirated and the aspirated. The latter are often represented by adding an "h," e.g. Phya, Thien; but this misleads many people into pronouncing those combinations as in English. I have, therefore, indicated the aspirated consonants by adding an apostrophe, e.g. P'ya, T'ien.

There are two Siamese classes of letters which are usually transliterated by "ch." One is more or less soft, as in "church," the other is hard, rather like the "tch" at the end of the word "pitch." To distinguish between these two classes of letters I have represented the soft sound by "j" and the hard sound by "ch." An exception has been made in the names of such well-known places as Chiangmai and Chiengsen, and perhaps a few more slight inconsistencies may be found.

In regard to this matter, I crave the indulgence of my readers. No two persons can be found to agree as to the best method of transliterating Siamese names, and no system is entirely satisfactory. All I can hope for is to cause as little confusion as possible to readers who do not know Siamese or Sanscrit.

# A HISTORY OF SIAM

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY HISTORY OF THE TAI

EVERYBODY knows, in a general way, that the Chinese claim to possess a national history dating back to the earliest ages; and those who have not studied the history of that remarkable people are apt to suppose that the dominions ruled over by the earliest Emperors were more or less identical in extent with the China of to-day. This, however, was not the case. The original limits of China were not very extensive. We read in Mr. Demetrius Boulger's *History of China* that in the year 585 B. C. the Chinese Empire did not extend farther south than the great River Yang-tse-kiang. The region of the barbarians then included all the Provinces lying south of that stream.

Who were these barbarians? Doubtless many and various tribes were included among them; but most of them were Tai<sup>1</sup> people, the ancestors of the Siamese, Laos<sup>2</sup> and Shans of to-day.

<sup>1</sup> The unaspirated form is used by almost all the members of this race. The aspirated form, "T'ai," is only known among the inhabitants of Southern Siam. The word is usually taken to mean "free." The attempt to fix a meaning into every racial or national name is, however, often useless and misleading. It is enough to say that "Tai" is the name of a particular kind of man.

<sup>2</sup> Puyists will object to the use of this word. It is, in fact, a corruption of the word "Lawa." The Laos have thus acquired the name of their aboriginal predecessors. Similarly, many a man of pure Saxon or Norman blood is proud to be known as a Briton. Another theory is that "Lao" simply means a *Man*. The word is used in this sense in certain Tai dialects. Whatever its origin, the word "Lao" is a convenient term, in general use to-day to describe the inhabitants of Northern Siam.

Even at the present time the population of Southern China shows signs of a strong Tai strain of blood. The Yunnanese are more Tai than Chinese, and pure Tai communities are to be found within a few hundred miles of the city of Canton, speaking a dialect which a Bangkok Siamese could understand with but little difficulty.

The Tai and Chinese are cognate races. Long before the dawn of history they must have had a common origin, as is shown by the physical resemblance between them, and also by the fact that the Tai and Chinese languages are similar in construction, both of them presenting certain peculiarities which distinguish them from any other languages in the world.

Chinese annals from the sixth century B. C. onwards contain many references to the "barbarians" south of the Yang-tse-kiang.

IN A. D. 69 a Tai Prince, named Liu Mao, submitted to the Chinese Emperor Mingti of the Han dynasty, together with seventy-seven minor Tai chiefs and 51,890 families, comprising 553,711 persons.

✓ IN A. D. 78 they rebelled against China, and their Prince, Lei Lao, was defeated in the great battle, as a result of which many of his people emigrated to the region now known as the Northern Shan States.

IN A. D. 225, during the temporary division of China into three Empires, the Tai were attacked by the Chinese General Kong Beng and forced to submit to the Emperor of Szechuan. Up to this period the Tai were known to the Chinese by the name of "Ailao."

By A. D. 650 the Tai were again independent, and had formed themselves into a powerful Kingdom, known as Nanchao. They were ruled over by a King, named Sinulo, who sent an embassy to conclude a treaty of

friendship with Kaotsong, the third Emperor of the Tang dynasty.

IN A. D. 745, during the reign of the Emperor Mingti (sixth of the Tang dynasty) the Tai King Pilawko entered into a new treaty with China. Later on, King Pilawko attacked Tibet, capturing several cities.

IN A. D. 750, Pilawko was succeeded by his son, Kolofeng, who made Talifu his capital. This King paid a visit to China, and while there was insulted by the Governor of Hunan. He returned home very indignant, and at once proceeded to invade China, capturing thirty-two towns and villages. The Chinese made several attempts to subdue him, but without success. They were twice beaten in the field, and on their third attempt a pestilence broke out, fear of which caused all the Chinese soldiers to run away.

Fearing that he could not resist the Chinese unaided, Kolofeng entered into an alliance with the King of Tibet, who conferred upon him the title of "younger brother."

IN A. D. 754 the Chinese again invaded Nanchao, but were defeated again and again with great slaughter. Numbers of them also fell victims to pestilence.

IN A. D. 779 King Kolofeng died, and was succeeded by his grandson Imohsun. He signalled his accession by at once invading China, assisted by the Tibetans, but was repulsed. This was in the reign of Taitson, the eighth Emperor of the Tang dynasty.

IN A. D. 787 Imohsun, acting on the advice of one Cheng-hui, a Chinese literate who had formerly been his tutor, entered into negotiations with China. He wrote to the Emperor Tetsong (ninth of the Tang dynasty) saying that his grandfather had been forced by ill-treatment to throw in his lot with the Tibetans.

He was, however, now tired of their arrogance. They were taskmasters rather than allies, forced his people to fight their wars, and levied taxes in his dominions.✓

As a result of this a treaty was concluded between China and Nanchao. The Emperor recognised Imohsun as King of Nanchao, and conferred upon him a gold seal. All the Tibetans in Nanchao were then massacred. A Tibetan army, which was sent to avenge the massacre, was utterly routed.

A Chinese envoy was then sent to Talifu and received with great pomp. Soldiers lined the roads, and the horses' harness was ablaze with gold and cowries. Imohsun wore a coat of gold mail and tiger-skin, and had twelve elephants drawn up in front of him. He kotowed to the ground, facing north, and swore everlasting fealty to China.

Imohsun now embarked upon a career of conquest, invading the territory of other states and tribes.

IN A.D. 794 he invaded Tibet, capturing sixteen towns, and taking immense booty.

IN A.D. 829 one of Imohsun's successors invaded China, capturing Sui-chu, Yong-chu, and Kong-chu. He was forced to retreat, but took with him many captives, among them some skilled artisans, who soon placed Nanchao on a par with China in matters of art, literature, and weaving.

IN A.D. 858 the Tai of Nanchao invaded Tonkin and brought back a great amount of booty.

IN A.D. 859 one Tsui Lung became King of Nanchao. He assumed the title of Emperor. This offended the Emperor Suentson (16th of the Tang dynasty), who retaliated by declining to send an envoy to the funeral of the late King of Nanchao. Tsui Lung thereupon invaded China and besieged Chengtu. Before he was

forced to retire "eighty per cent. of the inhabitants of certain towns in Szechuan were wearing artificial noses and ears made of wood." It is not recorded what the noses were made of.

The war thus started was continued under the Emperor Ytsong, who succeeded to the throne of China in A.D. 860. The Chinese were consistently unsuccessful, and Nanchao became entirely independent.

In A.D. 863 the Tai conquered Annam, but it was retaken three years later by the celebrated Chinese General Kaopien.

In A.D. 870 Tsui Lung again invaded China and besieged Chengtu, but was driven back. Another invasion in A.D. 875 was equally unsuccessful.

In A.D. 877 a Tai King, called by the Chinese "Fa" (P'ra?), succeeded to the throne of Nanchao. This King made peace with China, and received a Chinese envoy at his Court. In A.D. 884 his son married a daughter of the Emperor.

These events, chronicled with some detail by the Chinese historians, clearly show us that Nanchao was a powerful State, holding its own against the Chinese Emperors for many hundreds of years.

From the time of King Fa onwards, little mention is made in Chinese history of Nanchao, which had apparently once and for all accepted the position of a vassal kingdom, though Chinese control over the country was probably of a very shadowy kind.

In A.D. 1253 Nanchao (or Yunnan) was conquered by Kublai Khan. This finally put an end to the Tai kingdom, and resulted in a wholesale emigration of the inhabitants southwards, with important effects upon the history of Siam, as will be seen later.

As mentioned above, many of the Nanchao Tai had



emigrated to the region now known as the Northern Shan States as far back as the first century of the Christian era, and during the succeeding centuries we may assume that a steady stream of Tai settlers proceeded to the west and south-west. These people were the ancestors of the tribes now known as Shans or Tai Yai (great Tai). They formed a kingdom, or confederation of kingdoms, known in ancient chronicles as the kingdom of Pong.<sup>1</sup> Pong is one of the mysteries of history. Its position and extent are unknown, and the accounts given concerning it are so contradictory and so full of fable that the frivolous might say that the kingdom of Pong was Mrs. Harris, as Sir George Scott wittily remarks.

It is certain, however, that a strong Shan, or Western Tai, kingdom existed from about the sixth century onwards, with its capital probably at Müang Mao, on the Shweli River.

Luckily for the author, it does not fall within the scope of a history of Siam to seek to unravel the mysteries of the mediæval Shan Kingdom. The inhabitants of Siam are not descended from these Western Tai, but from the Eastern Tai, sometimes called the Tai Noi, whose early history is fairly well known from Chinese sources, as has been seen above.

The Chinese referred to the Nanchao Tai as barbarians, but we need not attach much meaning to this expression. They called all foreigners barbarians down to a very recent date, and doubtless the term is not even yet obsolete.

The truth is, as shown by Chinese history, that the Tai were no more barbarous than the Chinese themselves,

<sup>1</sup> Kengtung, in the south-west of Yunnan, is referred to as "Pong" in the history of Chiengmai (A.D. 1660).

and, if we possessed histories written by those early Tai, we might perhaps find that the Chinese had as much to learn from the ancient Tai as their descendants have to learn from the Siamese of to-day.

It is clear from the annals of the Tang dynasty that the Tai kingdom of Nanchao was a highly organised State. There were Ministers of State, Censors or Examiners, Generals, Record Officers, Chamberlains, Judges, Treasurers, Ministers of Commerce etc., the native name of each Department being given as "Shwang." Minor Officials managed the granaries, royal stables, taxes, etc. The military organisation was similar to that of modern Siam. It was arranged by tens, centurions, chiliarchs, deka-chiliarchs, and so on. Military service then, as now, was compulsory for all able-bodied men, lots being drawn for each levy. Each soldier was supplied with a leather coat and a pair of trousers; they wore helmets and carried shields of rhinoceros hide.

Land was apportioned to each family according to rank, a system which survives in Siam to the present day, in the nominal *sakdi na* grade conferred upon officials.

There were six Metropolitan Departments and six Provincial Viceroys in Nanchao.

The people were acquainted with the art of weaving cotton and rearing silkworms. West of Yang-chang a mulberry-tree grew, the wood of which was used for making bowls; and gold was found in many parts, both in the sands of the rivers and in the mountains.

When the Tai King appeared in public eight white-scalloped standards of greyish purple were carried

<sup>1</sup> Possibly the same as modern Siamese Krasuang, a department. "Kra" is a common prefix.

before him, also two feather fans, a hair plume, an axe, and a parasol of kingfisher's feathers. The standards of the Queen-mother were scalloped with brown instead of white.

The chief dignitaries wore a tiger skin.

Each man paid a tax of two measures of rice a year, and there was no *corvée* labour. Some may say that in the last respect the ancient Tai set a good example to their Siamese descendants.

Had the Nanchao Tai a written character, or did they use Chinese ideographs? We do not know. In the opinion of the author, it is very improbable that any system of writing at all resembling those now in use (all of which are of Indian origin) was adopted before the eleventh century. It is likely that the Nanchao Tai used Chinese characters.

As to the religion of the ancient Tai, we likewise have no definite information. We know that Buddhism, the religion of almost all the modern Tai, was introduced into China, from the south, during the first century of the Christian era. It is, therefore, probable that the Buddhist religion was quite familiar to the Tai inhabitants of Nanchao for several centuries before many of them migrated south. The Buddhism of China is, however, the later form of the religion, known as the "Mahayana" or Great Vehicle, whereas all the Tai since the dawn of their modern history in the twelfth century have been followers of the "Hinayana" or Small Vehicle, which claims, with some justice, to be the true religion taught by the Buddha himself.

It is fairly certain, therefore, that the Tai, as a race, became Buddhists after they had emigrated to the south. There may have been some Buddhists among the old Nanchao Tai, but as a nation they were almost

certainly animists, worshipping the beneficent spirits of the hills, forests, and waters, and propitiating numerous demons with sacrifices and offerings. This simple faith survives in Siam to the present day, and in the north is still more truly the religion of the country people than is Buddhism.

## NOTE TO CHAPTER I

Marco Polo visited southern China about A.D. 1272, after the conquest of Nanchao by Kublai Khan. He describes non-Chinese races living in the south and south-west of China; presumably these were Tai people.

Marco Polo mentions the Province of Karaian, with its capital at Yachi (probably Talifu). The people of this Province were idolators, had a language peculiar to themselves, lived on rice, and used cowrie shells as money and for ornament. They also ate raw meat, chopped up and put into a pickle of salt and spices. This is the dish known as *lap* in northern Siam at the present time.

In the Province of Zardandan, presumably also a Tai Province, Marco Polo found the people tattooing themselves with a five-pronged implement, just as the Tai do to-day. In this district they had neither temples nor idols, but worshipped their ancestors. They possessed no knowledge of writing. The treatment of disease was carried out by a process of exorcism of evil spirits, and the description given of this process does not greatly differ from the method in use at the present time in many parts of Siam.

## CHAPTER II

### SIAM BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TAI DOMINION

WE have seen in the preceding chapter the Tai in their original home, Nanchao. We have seen them migrating southwards, driven forth by the pressure of the Chinese. What manner of country was Siam in the days of those early Tai settlers ?

The first inhabitants of Siam, long before the dawn of history, must have been very much the same as the cave-dwellers of Europe. Their old flint tools and weapons are constantly being dug up. These are just like those made by primitive man throughout the world. We can form no clear mental picture of the makers of these flint weapons.

Later on, Siam was inhabited by three races, whose descendants may still be seen. In the South were two types, a curly-headed people of Negrito origin, and a wavy-haired, Indonesian race. The remnants of these two races, known respectively as Semang and Sakai, are still to be found wandering, naked and squalid, in the forests of the Malay Peninsula. For centuries past their Siamese and Malay successors have looked upon them as mere animals. Sir Hugh Clifford, in one of his inimitable stories, has described the annual Sakai hunt held by a former Sultan of Pahang.

A strain of Semang and Sakai blood is probably to be found among the Siamese inhabitants of the Malay Peninsula. Curly hair, rare among men of pure Tai race,

is often to be seen there, and the curious chanting voice and clipped words of the Peninsular Siamese is said to bear some resemblance to Sakai speech.

In northern Siam dwelt a different race, the Was or Lawas. These people have not, like the Sakais, been almost exterminated. To the north of Burma they still inhabit several extensive districts. They are there divided into the wild and the tame Was. The former are chiefly known through their habit of collecting human heads, and decorating the approaches of their villages with rows of skulls. The tame Was of the Shan States, and their brethren the Lawas of Siam, have long since abandoned these ghoulis practices, and live as peaceful cultivators or hunters in their mountain villages. Most of the Lawas of Siam are now Buddhists.<sup>1</sup>

The Was and Lawas are rather tall, of fair complexion, and generally pleasing in appearance and manners. The present Laos, or Tai of northern Siam, show distinct traces of Lawa blood.<sup>2</sup>

Many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years before the Christian era, another race of men settled in southern Siam, and gradually dispossessed and almost exterminated the aboriginal inhabitants. These intruders were the Khmers. Their origin is uncertain, but they were members of a race which now numbers many millions

<sup>1</sup> Heylyn, in his *Cosmographie* (London, 1664), says that the Laos were obliged to seek the protection of Siam owing to constant attacks by the hill tribes, called "Gueoni," who used to kill and eat their prisoners. This may point to a tradition that the Lawas of northern Siam were at one time head-hunters.

<sup>2</sup> In the southern Shan State of Kengtung, the present inhabitants of which are Tai, a curious custom still exists. At the inauguration ceremony of each ruling Prince, two Was are brought down from one of their mountain villages, and take a prominent part in the proceedings. This is supposed to be an acknowledgment that the Was were once masters of the country. Ethnically and linguistically the Was or Lawas are related to the Mons.

of descendants in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula. The Cambodians are the direct descendants of the Khmers, and the Mohns or Talaings of Pegu, the K'amuks of French Laos, and the K'as and other smaller tribes in the Shan States are all scions of the same original stock.

These Khmers, whatever their origin may have been, settled in prehistoric times along the whole sea coast from the mouth of the Irawadi to the mouth of the Mekong river. To judge by their modern descendants, they were a people of comparatively small stature, of darker complexion than the Lawas or Was, and somewhat effeminate in appearance.

These early Khmer settlers, as also the Lawas in the north, were animists, and have left behind no stone or brick buildings of any kind. They were probably an illiterate and uncultured race.

The Khmer civilisation, the monumental remains of which have so astonished all investigators, was of purely Indian origin. It is not possible to say for certain when the first Indian settlers came to Siam or Cambodia, but there is no reason to suppose that any of their buildings, the remains of which are now in existence, date from pre-Buddhist times. It may here be remarked that even in India the most ancient monuments which have as yet been discovered are of Buddhist, not Brahmanic, origin.<sup>1</sup>

King Asoka, the famous ruler of Magadha, before he embraced the tenets of Buddha, invaded the country of Kalinga, in southern India. According to a rock inscription of King Asoka, over a hundred thousand natives of Kalinga were made prisoners in this campaign, and large numbers were slain.

<sup>1</sup> Buddha died 543 B.C., according to the computation in use in Buddhist countries. The best European authorities believe that the real date was about seventy years later.

All the ancient stone inscriptions found in the region peopled by the Khmers are purely southern Indian, both in lettering and language, and there seems some reason to suppose that the first great influx of Indians into this region dated from the time of King Asoka's invasion of Kalinga, and that the settlers were natives of Kalinga. We may assume that within a few years these Indians formed colonies at various points along the coasts of the countries now known as Pegu, Siam, Cambodia and Cochin China.

Some time after his conquest of Kalinga, King Asoka adopted the doctrines of Buddha, and became a most resolute apostle of Buddhism. In the year 307 B.C. he presided over a great Buddhist Council at Pataliputta. At this Council not only was the Buddhist Church purified from many abuses which had crept in, but a great missionary effort was inaugurated, for the purpose of spreading the faith in foreign lands.

The *Mahavamsa*<sup>1</sup> gives a list of ten Buddhist missionary monks, who were sent forth to various parts of the world by King Asoka. Among these were the monks Sona and Uttara, who were sent to the land of Suvarnabhumi. Professor Rhys Davids, in his work on Buddhism, identifies Suvarnabhumi as consisting of the region extending from Pegu right down through the Malay Peninsula. There has been considerable controversy on this point, some authorities claiming that Suvarnabhumi was Pegu, the others that it was southern Siam.<sup>2</sup> The exact situation of the original Suvarnabhumi is

<sup>1</sup> Translation of Geiger and Bode.

<sup>2</sup> Suvarnabhumi means "land of gold." There is no gold found in Pegu, but there are gold mines in southern Siam. There is also a town in Siam called Uthong, or "source of gold," which was known in the Middle Ages as Suwanp'umi, or Suvarnabhumi. It was the capital of the State ruled over by King Rama T'ibedi before he founded Ayut'ia. Not far from this place was the ancient Buddhist shrine of Nak'on Prat'om or P'ropat'om, meaning "Original town" or "Original Pagoda." These are the principal points relied upon by those who claim that southern Siam was the original Suvarnabhumi.



immaterial. Certain it is that it was somewhere in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, and that the Buddhist Church which was founded there gradually spread its teaching over the whole of the countries now known as Siam, Burma and Cambodia.

Another point as to which there has been some divergence of opinion is whether Brahmanism or Buddhism was first introduced into Siam. It seems possible that there were Indian settlers in pre-Buddhistic times. They must have professed Brahmanism. On the other hand, Brahmanism is not, and never was, a missionising faith. Early Buddhism was strong in missionary endeavour, and we may therefore assume that the first foreign religion adopted by the Mohn-Khmers was Buddhism.

About the end of the first century of the Christian era, a certain King Kanishka was ruling over the realm of Gandhara in northern India. This monarch set up his capital at Purushapura (Peshawar). He was, like King Asoka, a great supporter of the Buddhist faith. He called together a Buddhist Council, at which the Sanscrit tongue was adopted as the religious language of Buddhism, and at which a large number of innovations in faith and practice were admitted. This Council resulted in the division of the Buddhist world into two sections; those in the north of India followed the so-called Mahayana, or Greater Vehicle, those in the south clung to the original teaching of Buddha, which was distinguished by the name of Hinayana, or Lesser Vehicle. Among the Buddhists of to-day the Nepalese, Tibetans, Chinese, Japanese and Annamites, follow various forms of the Mahayana. The Cingalese, Burmese, Siamese and Cambodians adhere to the Hinayana.

King Kanishka, like King Asoka, sent forth missionaries, who preached the new Mahayana creed in foreign lands. In many of the ancient cities of Indo-China, for instance at Nak'on Prat'om (also called P'rapat'om) in Siam, and Thaton in Burma, images of Buddha, describing with finger and thumb a circle to emblemise the "wheel of the law," have been dug up. These are probably Mahayana images, and the fact of their discovery in Siam and Burma shows that the Mahayana form of Buddhism was at one time followed in these countries.

The approximate date of the earliest Buddhist architectural remains in Siam is not known. Prince Damrong and other competent authorities believe that the original *stupa* over which the existing large pagoda of Nak'on Prat'om was built dates from the time of King Asoka. Others place it much later.

After the death of King Kanishka of Gandhara, Buddhism gradually decayed in India before the influence of Brahmanism, and even in those parts in which it held its own it became debased by the introduction of all kinds of Brahmanic ceremonies and superstitions.

In the year A.D. 629 a Chinese monk, Hioun Tsang, who travelled to India for the purpose of investigating the Buddhist religion, has left it on record that he met with a certain monarch named Ciladitya, the ruler of Kanyakubja (now known as Kanauj) who was a devout supporter of Buddhism. The King held a general Council, at which both Brahman and Buddhist teachers were present. He also sent out missionaries to foreign countries. We may conclude that King Ciladitya's missionaries had some following in Siam, since images peculiar to that period have been discovered at Nak'on

Prat'om, Nak'on Srit'ammarat, and in other parts of Siam.

As time went on, we may suppose that among the Khmers of Siam, as in India, the religion of the people consisted of a jumble of northern and southern Buddhism and Brahmanism.

As Buddhism declined in India, it may be supposed that it likewise declined among the Khmers. However this may be, it is certain that the earliest Khmer Kings of whom we have any knowledge were followers of Brahmanism. This line of Kings, presumably of Indian origin, commenced to rule early in the seventh century A. D.

The eighth King of this Indian dynasty, named Jayavarman II, who reigned for over sixty years (A.D. 802 to A.D. 869), was the builder of the famous stone temple at Angkor T'om, and one of his successors, Suryavarman II, built the still more celebrated temple at Angkor Wat, about A.D. 1100.

Most of these Kings of Cambodia were Brahmans, not Buddhists, and their temples were dedicated to the worship of Indian deities.

The statement that these huge temples, the remains of which fill all beholders with awe and wonder, were built under any particular monarch, requires some qualification. Hundreds of years were probably spent in the construction of these buildings. Sir Hugh Clifford has given us a wonderful picture of the miserable Khmer serfs toiling from generation to generation to complete these Brahman temples for their Indian rulers and taskmasters. Yet in the end the work was never finished. As we shall see in chapter iv., the power of the Cambodian Kings was so undermined by the Tai

immigrants from the north that in A.D. 1388 their capital was moved to Phnom Penh, and their still unfinished temples were abandoned. Long before that time, Brahmanism, triumphant in India, had declined in Indo-China. Before the great Brahman shrines of Cambodia were forsaken, Buddhism had been introduced into them.

Buddhism and Brahmanism continued to exist side by side, but it is probable that neither of them really superseded the old animistic beliefs of the Khmer and Lawa inhabitants, or the Tai immigrants, until about the eleventh century, when the conquests of the Burmese King Anurutha resulted in a general adoption of Buddhism. To this day very many animistic beliefs and ceremonies persist, particularly in northern Siam.

In A.D. 1296 a Chinese Ambassador was sent by the Emperor Kublai Khan to Cambodia. He has left an account of his embassy.<sup>1</sup> He describes the magnificent walls and buildings of the capital, Angkor T'om, though, strangely enough, he makes no mention of Angkor Wat, which he must presumably have seen. At that time the Cambodian Empire had already lost a great part of its possessions. As will be seen in the next chapter, Chiengmai, P'ayao, Suk'ot'ai, and probably Ut'ong (Suwanp'umi) were independent States, under Tai rulers, when the Chinese diplomat wrote his memoirs.

According to this ambassador, Cambodia was a vassal State of China. Doubtless the independent Tai States were likewise regarded by the Chinese as vassals. These Chinese claims need not, however, be taken too seriously. Every nation of the earth was at one time regarded as subject to the "Middle Kingdom." It would probably

<sup>1</sup> Translated by M. Abel Remusat (*Nouvelles mélanges Asiatiques*, Paris, 1829.) and more recently by M. Pelliot. (*Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient*, Vol. III, 1923.)

not be difficult to prove by Chinese documentary evidence that Queen Victoria was a vassal of the Emperor of China. There is no reason to suppose that China at any time exercised any real political control over Cambodia or over any of the ancient Tai states of Siam.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TAI ESTABLISH THEMSELVES IN SIAM.

#### THE EARLY TAI KINGDOMS

WE must not picture to ourselves the Tai as an invading army, marching southwards, attacking the Cambodian Empire, and filching away its dominions. No; the establishment of free Tai Kingdoms in Siam was the result rather of a series of rebellions than of an invasion.

When did the first Tai settlers come to Siam? We cannot say, but it may be confidently stated that for hundreds of years before any Tai ruler appeared, settlers from the north had been coming in, forming Tai communities, and intermarrying with the Lawa and Mohn-Khmer inhabitants.

We have plenty of histories concerning the early achievements of the Tai in Siam; unfortunately, however, they are so intermingled with fable that it has become impossible to extract from them whatever germ of truth may exist, and the author, who desires to write a history, not a book of fairy tales, has been forced to abandon these early records in despair.

We are given, for instance, a list of Kings (presumably Tai) of Chiengsen, going back to a time previous to the birth of Buddha, one of whom reigned for 120 years. This history of Chiengsen is a mere myth, but it provides us, in the end, with the name of a man who may perhaps be a real historical character. This man, Prince P'rohm,

who is stated to have been a scion of the family of the Kings of Chiengsen, founded the city of Müang Fang, about A.D. 857. He then attacked the Cambodian Empire, and conquered their territory down to the present town of Sawank'alok, where he founded a city.<sup>1</sup>

This Prince P'roh, if he existed, may be regarded as the first real Tai ruler in Siam, and his city, Müang Fang, as the earliest Tai stronghold.

Doubtless Prince P'roh found plenty of Tai settlers to welcome him on his victorious advance to the south.

An independent, or semi-independent, Tai State was thus formed in northern Siam during the ninth century, and another Tai State was probably established at Müang Sao, the modern Luang P'rabang, about the same time.

In 1057 a famous King rose to power in Burma, namely King Anurutha the Great. His capital was at Pagan. This King extended his dominions in every direction, conquered southern China, and attacked the Cambodian Empire, then already waning in power. There is no doubt that practically the whole of the present territory of Siam was for some time under the sway of King Anurutha.

King Anurutha was an ardent Buddhist. Some authorities think that he first introduced Buddhism into Burma. If so, he probably acquired his Buddhism from the great Buddhist centre of Nak'on Prat'om in southern Siam. Certain it is that there was some close connection between Nak'on Prat'om and Pagan. This is shown by the discovery in these two places of carvings and of ancient coins of a type found nowhere else in the world.

Wherever King Anurutha acquired his religion, it is known that he was most ardent in spreading it. A great Buddhist revival took place in India at about the same

<sup>1</sup> Then called Jaleng.

time, and King Anurutha had no difficulty in importing missionaries from India and Ceylon, by whom Buddhism was preached in Burma and Siam. There is little doubt but that Buddhism acquired that predominating position which it still holds in both countries owing to the efforts of King Anurutha.

King Anurutha's conquests probably weakened the Cambodian Empire, and resulted, after the removal of Burmese control, in the formation of numerous independent, or semi-independent, Tai States.

Siam has suffered much from Burmese invasions, and the shameful destruction of Ayut'ia in 1767 will never be forgotten. But it should also be remembered that Tai freedom owed its inception partly to the Burmese King Anurutha, and that to the same monarch must be ascribed the final establishment in Siam of that wonderful Faith which has, without doubt, strengthened the Siamese Kingdom and elevated the national character.

In 996 a descendant of Prince P'rohm, K'un Chom T'amma, founded the city of P'ayao, which became the capital of an independent Tai State.

About 1238 a blow was struck at the Cambodian Empire from which it never recovered. For some time before that date the Tai in the centre of Siam had been causing trouble to the Cambodian Government, being doubtless inspired by the examples set them at Müang Fang and P'aya ). A Cambodian general named Khlon Lamphong was sent by the King of Cambodia to restore order, but he was defeated in a pitched battle by K'un Bang Klang T'ao and K'un P'a Müang, two Tai chiefs. After the battle, these two chiefs entered the town of Suk'ot'ai, then the northern capital of the Cambodian Empire, and K'un Bang Klang was consecrated as



King of Suk'ot'ai with the title of King Sri Int'arat'itya, a title originally conferred upon his ally, K'un P'a Müang, by the King of Cambodia.

Thus was founded the Tai Kingdom of Suk'ot'ai, destined to become a mighty state, though its power was of but short duration.

The capture of Suk'ot'ai was an event which so fascinated the imagination of the Tai people that they have invested the first Tai King of Suk'ot'ai with the mysterious attributes of a certain legendary hero, P'ra Ruang. The name P'ra Ruang is, in fact, conferred without discrimination upon all the Kings of Suk'ot'ai.

The reign of King Sri Int'arat'itya, first King of Suk'ot'ai and, one might say, first King of Siam, was spent in extending his dominions at the expense of the King of Cambodia and also of his Western neighbours.

In particular, as we know from a carved inscription, he entered upon a war with the Prince of Chot (Mesort) who had tried to capture the town of Tak.<sup>1</sup> In this war, Prince Ramk'amheng, the third son of King Int'arat'itya, greatly distinguished himself by engaging in single combat with the Prince of Chot; both the combatants were mounted on elephants, and the young Prince Ramk'amheng utterly defeated his opponent and forced him to flee, with all his army.

During this King's reign, Siam received a tremendous wave of Tai immigrants, who fled from Yunnan after Kublai Khan's conquest of the Nanchao Kingdom in 1254. Doubtless it is due to this fact that King Int'arat'itya was able to deal so successfully with the Cambodians; he had a constant supply of Tai recruits from the north. Few now realise that the existence of Siam as a sovereign State is partly due to the conquests of Kublai Khan in southern China.

<sup>1</sup> North of Raheng, at the junction of the Me P'ing and Me Wang Rivers.

The date of King Int'arat'itya's death is not known. His eldest son died young, and he was succeeded by his second son, who bore the name of King Ban Müang. This King did not reign for long; he died about 1275 and was followed by his ambitious and valiant younger brother, Ramk'ambheng.

King Ramk'ambheng justly earned the title of Ramk'ambheng the Great. He was one of the most redoubtable warriors and conquerors whom Siam has ever produced. In his long reign of over forty years he raised the struggling state of Suk'ot'ai to be a powerful and extensive Kingdom. When he died, the following cities and districts were subject or tributary to him: Phre, Nan, Luang P'rabang, P'itsanulok, Lomsak, Wiengchan, Nak'onsawan, Suwanp'umi,<sup>1</sup> Ratburi, P'etchaburi, Nak'on Srit'amarat, Raheng, Mesot, Tenasserim, Tavoy, Martaban, Taungu, Pegu right up to the Bay of Bengal, and other districts which cannot now be identified.

It must not, however, be assumed that King Ramk'ambheng exercised effective control over all these regions. For instance, the Prince of Sup'an had by this time already attained to a powerful position, and the Tai rulers of Lopburi and the ancient city of Ayodhia (both related to King Ramk'ambheng) were either independent or were subject to the King of Cambodia. We read in Chinese history that in 1289 a Tai State to the south of Suk'ot'ai sent an embassy to China. This State was called by the Chinese "Law Hok Kok" and is stated to have later overcome Suk'ot'ai. It was probably Lawo.<sup>2</sup>

The eastern portion of Siam, including Chantabun, still belonged to Cambodia. To the north-west lay two

Sup'an.

<sup>2</sup> Now called Lopburi.

independent States, namely: (1) The Kingdom of Lanna-t'ai, comprising Chiengmai, Nak'on Lamp'ang, Lamp'un, Chiengrai, Chiengsen, and the present State of Kengtung (then called K'emat ); and (2) the small but redoubtable Principality of P'ayao.

A great many of the events of King Ramk'ambheng's reign are known to us, partly from Burmese, partly from Chinese sources, and partly from stone inscriptions which have been discovered.

The circumstances under which King Ramk'ambheng acquired ascendancy in Pegu are very interesting.

The Burmese Governor of Martaban, Alienma, having disobeyed the orders of the King of Burma, Tarekpyemin, was turned out by the Burmese. He escaped to Siam and took an oath of fealty to King Ramk'ambheng, who thereupon restored him to power at Martaban. The Burmese Government was at that time so disorganised that no interference was attempted. For some time previous to this, a Shan adventurer named Mogado had been residing at Suk'ot'ai, where he became a great favourite with the Siamese King, to whom he presented a white elephant which had come into his possession. This, be it said, is the first Siamese white elephant of which history makes mention.

While King Ramk'ambheng was absent on a campaign against Cambodia, Mogado eloped with one of his daughters, and escaped to Martaban, where he was well known, having previously resided there as a trader. He rebelled against Aleinma, murdered him, and made himself Governor of Martaban. He later quarrelled with the King of Pegu, defeated him, and made himself King. In order to strengthen his position he submitted to his old patron, King Ramk'ambheng, to whom he swore

fealty, and in 1286 the Siamese King conferred upon him the title of Chao Fa Rua.<sup>1</sup>

An interesting feature of the reign of King Ramk'ámheng was the opening of direct political relations with China. Kublai Khan, in his old age, sought to consolidate his power by conciliating those neighbouring rulers whom he had not thought it necessary to subdue. In 1282 a Chinese Mandarin named Haw Chow Chi arrived at the Court of Suk'ot'ai to negotiate a treaty of amity between China and Siam, and in 1294 King Ramk'ámheng himself proceeded on a visit to the Emperor. Would that he had kept a diary of his journey! We may conclude that he enjoyed his visit, for he repeated it in 1300, and on this second occasion brought back with him a number of Chinese artisans, who inaugurated the famous Sawank'alok potteries, the products of which are now so much sought after by collectors. King Ramk'ámheng did not meet Kublai Khan on his second visit to China, for the aged Emperor had died in 1295.<sup>2</sup>

King Ramk'ámheng maintained friendly relations with his northern neighbours, the King of Lannat'ai (Chiengmai) and the Prince of P'ayao.

King Mengrai of Lannat'ai was born at Chiengsen in the year of the establishment of a Siamese Kingdom at Suk'ot'ai (1238). Legend has it that he was born under miraculous circumstances, and has invested him with superhuman strength, and semi-divine attributes; but he was certainly a remarkable man. Early in his life he founded the town of Chiengrai, where he ruled for several years. In 1281 he attacked and captured the ancient city of Lamp'un, then called Harip'unjai, which appears then to have been ruled by a Mohn dynasty, as

<sup>1</sup> Wareru in Burmese history. It is related that the King of Siam sent him a present of a white elephant. This is improbable, as the Kings of Siam never gave white elephants to vassal Princes.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Damrong. Introduction to Royal Autograph edition of P'ongsawadan, pp. 92-95. (Bangkok, 1919).

vassals of the King of Cambodia. Lamp'un did not satisfy his requirements as a capital, so in 1290 he founded the city of Wieng Kumkan, the remains of which can still be seen five miles from Chiengmai.<sup>1</sup> This site being subject to inundations, the present city of Chiengmai was founded in 1296.

Before laying the foundation of Chiengmai, King Mengrai invited King Ramk'amheng and K'un Ngam Müang, Prince of P'ayao, to co-operate with him in choosing a suitable site. The task was an easy one: the two advisers heard of a site on which two white sambhurs, two white barking deer, and a white mouse with a family of five little white mice had been seen. Such omens were not to be despised, and on that spot the town of Chiengmai was built.

The friendship of these three potentates must have been very genuine, for it had withstood a severe strain.

King Ramk'amheng, like many other great men, could not resist a pretty face. Some years before the foundation of Chiengmai, during a visit which he paid to Prince Ngam Müang at P'ayao, he was found paying far too much attention to the Prince's beautiful consort. Prince Ngam Müang discovered the intrigue, and seized King Ramk'amheng. In his jealous anger, his first impulse was to slay the offender, but on second thoughts he decided to submit the matter to the arbitration of King Mengrai (then of Chiengrai). King Mengrai proceeded at once to P'ayao and to him Prince Ngam Müang poured out his bitter complaints; but King Mengrai pointed out to him the importance of maintaining friendship between the three Tai States, so as to resist their common enemies, and urged him to do nothing rash. Finding that King

<sup>1</sup> There was probably a more ancient city near the site of Chiengmai, stated by some authorities to have been called Lamaing. The ruins of the temple called Wat Chet Yot date from before the time of King Mengrai.

Ramk'anheng admitted his fault, King Mengrai instructed him to apologise, and to pay to Prince Ngam Müang 990,000 cowrie shells as compensation. King Ramk'anheng carried out these conditions, and the friendship between the three potentates became thereafter even firmer than before.

This incident shows that King Ramk'anheng truly deserved the title of "Great." A pettier man would have sought to revenge himself on the weaker neighbour who had humbled him; but King Ramk'anheng was noble enough to admit when he was in the wrong, and to apologise to the man whom he had injured.

We are further told concerning King Ramk'anheng that he caused a bell to be put up at Suk'ot'ai, to be rung by any person who had suffered wrong or injury, and was desirous of appealing to the King for justice. When the bell was heard to ring, the King came forth and held enquiry into the matter complained of. No man ever appealed in vain to this great ruler for justice.

King Ramk'anheng's chief claim to fame, however, is founded upon his reorganisation of the Siamese alphabet. Until his time various forms of the Cambodian alphabet had been in use in Siam. King Ramk'anheng altered and adapted the existing characters so as to render them suitable for writing Tai words. The alphabet introduced by him is, in its essential features, the same as that in use at the present day. This alphabet was first brought into use in 1283.<sup>1</sup>

The exact date of King Ramk'anheng's death is not known, but he was still living in 1314, for in that year he invested the grandson of Wareru (Mogado) as vassal

<sup>1</sup> The alphabet of King Ramk'anheng was adopted throughout Siam, including the Chiangmai dominions. The present western Lao alphabet is a more modern form, corrupted by Burmese influence. It is, in fact, merely a relic of foreign domination. The Luang Prabang alphabet is a form of the Ramk'anheng alphabet.

King of Pegu, with the title of "Prachao Sen Müang Min."

Prince Damrong fixes the date of King Ramk'anheng's death in (about) the year 1317. If this is correct, he died in the same year as his friend King Mengrai of Chiengmai, who also departed this life in 1317, after reigning for 59 years. The old Prince Ngam Müang of P'ayao lived on until 1328. He reigned for sixty years. Ten years after his death P'ayao ceased to be an independent State, and was annexed to Chiengmai (1338).

King Ramk'anheng was succeeded by his son, who bore the title of Loet'ai.

Not much is known concerning King Loet'ai. Like so many of the sons of the great warriors of whom we read in history, he was utterly unable to defend his father's hard-won possessions. Scarcely had he ascended the throne when the King of Pegu threw off his alliance and attacked and captured Tavoy and Tenasserim; and an attempt made by King Loet'ai in 1330 to recover those cities met with no success.<sup>1</sup>

In Siam itself, moreover, a rival power had sprung up, which was destined to obtain, in time, dominion over the whole Kingdom. This was the Principality of Siwan-p'umi,<sup>2</sup> or Ut'ong, ruled over by an energetic Prince who was descended from the Chiengsen Princes, and was probably a distant relative of King Mengrai. Before the end of King Loet'ai's reign, the Prince of Ut'ong had annexed a large portion of the dominions of the Suk'ot'ai Kingdom. Parts of the Cambodian Empire, moreover, which had never been conquered, even by King Ramk'anheng, were annexed by the Prince of Ut'ong, including Lopburi, the old city of Ayodhya, and Chantabun.

<sup>1</sup> The Burmese annals relate that Tavoy and Tenasserim were retaken by Siam. This was probably the work of King Rama T'ibodi of Ayut'ia.

<sup>2</sup> Near the modern town of Sup'an.

In 1350 the Prince of Ut'ong founded a new city at Ayut'ia, and proclaimed himself King, with the title of Rama T'ibodi I. This was the commencement of the present Kingdom of Siam.

The reign of King Rama T'ibodi must be dealt with in another chapter, but it will be convenient first to describe briefly the concluding events of the Kingdom of Suk'ot'ai. King Loet'ai died in 1347; his son, Prince T'ammara-ja Lüt'ai, was compelled to fight for the throne against some rebels or conspirators, whom he overcame and executed. He succeeded to a very small Kingdom, including only the towns of Suk'ot'ai, Sawank'alok, Kamp'engp'et, P'itsa-nulok, P'ichit, and Nak'on Sawan, and some claim to suzerainty over P're, Nan and Luang P'rabang.<sup>1</sup>

King T'ammara-ja did not seek to recover the lost Suk'ot'ai dominions, but devoted himself to religious works, such as the building of pagodas and monasteries, and sought in every way to promote the happiness and welfare of his subjects.

The King effected religious reformations with the aid of Buddhist priests whom he caused to come from Ceylon, and had several large images of Buddha set up at Suk'ot'ai. One of these, cast in 1361, may be seen to-day in Wat Sut'at at Bangkok.<sup>2</sup>

In the same year (1361) King T'ammara-ja Lüt'ai became a Buddhist priest, an event which was considered so remarkable that it was connected in the public mind with an earthquake and other portents which occurred at about the same time.

King T'ammara-ja Lüt'ai was a great builder of roads and digger of canals. He made a road from Suk'ot'ai to Sawank'alok, and other roads to connect his capital with Kamp'engp'et and other smaller cities. It is

<sup>1</sup> He appears to have been crowned as King or Viceroy of Sawank'alok in 1340.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Damrong's notes to Peyal autograph edition of the P'engrawadan.



further recorded of him that "his mercy and charity were as boundless as the waters of the ocean. He loved his people like his own children. He was wont to pardon criminals, give them the wherewithal to make restitution for their crimes, and send them home. In his time there were no slaves in all the land. All men were free and happy. His fame spread among all nations, and men flocked from every side to live in peace under his gracious rule."

King T'ammara-jā Lüt'ai was a lover of peace. On the few occasions when he was forced to go to war, such as an expedition which he undertook against P're and Nan in 1359, he won less renown by his military prowess than by the humanity with which he treated his prisoners. In the East, at that period, prisoners of war who were not slaughtered usually became slaves. But this King had no use for slaves, so "he supported and fed his prisoners, and would not let them come to misery and ruin."

*Sic transit gloria mundi.* The very name of this great and good King was forgotten, together with all his noble deeds, until the year 1833, when the stone inscription describing his reign was deciphered, after having lain neglected for five hundred years. Later, in 1912, a treatise on Buddhist cosmology, composed by this King, was discovered and published. It is called the *Trai-bhumikatha*, and bears, both in its style and in its spirit, the imprint of the personality of King T'ammara-jā Lüt'ai.

This monarch also built palaces and other public

<sup>1</sup> This is from a stone inscription in the Khmer language, discovered in 1833, by Prince Maha Mongkut (later King Rama IV) and translated by Prince Pawaret. This stone has since crumbled away to such an extent that a large part of the inscription has now vanished for ever. There is reason to suppose that Prince Pawaret's translation was not very exact.

For a French translation of this inscription, in its present state, and of other stone inscriptions dealing with the Kings of Suk'ot'ai, see the *Recueil des inscriptions du Siam*, Part I, by Professor G. Coedès published in Siamese and French, Bangkok, 1924.

buildings at Suk'ot'ai, the ruins of which may still be seen. He was, moreover, an astronomer, and reformed the calendar, and was also an adept at astrology, for the teaching of which science he instituted a school in the palace.

The date of King T'ammaraja Lüt'ai's death is not known, but he probably died about 1370. He was succeeded by his son, Prince Sai, who assumed the same title of T'ammaraja. This title became a kind of generic one for the rulers of Suk'ot'ai and P'itsanulok.

King T'ammaraja II (Sai), after a reign of eight years, was forced to become a vassal of the King of Ayut'ia. This event marks the end of the independent Tai Kingdom of Suk'ot'ai, after an existence of 132 years. The glory of this kingdom was mainly due to one man, King Ramk'angheng; had his successors been warriors like him, the Siamese Kingdom of Suk'ot'ai might have endured until the present time.

The Kings of Suk'ot'ai continued for some years to rule as vassals of Ayut'ia. T'ammaraja II reigned until about 1406, and was succeeded by his son, T'ammaraja III, who was probably a mere boy, since it is recorded that in 1409 the Queen-mother assisted at the consecration of a high priest. He died in 1419. The next King, T'ammaraja IV, appears to have been a brother of T'ammaraja III. He was little more than hereditary Governor of Suk'ot'ai, and his successors hardly deserve the title of King; though, as we shall see later, a scion of this family was destined, in 1568, to become King of Siam and to revive the title of T'ammaraja.

## CHAPTER IV

### FOUNDATION OF AYUT'IA—

### REIGN OF KING RAMA T'IBODI I'

As already related in the preceding chapter, Ayut'ia was founded by the Prince of Ut'ong (now called Sup'an) in the year 1350.

There are few persons mentioned in Siamese history around whose names there hangs a great amount of mystery than the founder of Ayut'ia. It has been suggested that he came from Kamp'engp'et, from Cambodia or from Sawank'alok. To discuss all the arguments would be out of place in a work of this kind. The best authorities now hold that he was the ruler of Ut'ong, or Suwanp'umi, an ancient city standing near the site of the modern town of Sup'an, and that the name by which he is known in the Siamese annals, P'ya Ut'ong, is not a personal name, but the name of his original domain. In this same manner, the Chief of Chiengmai is called at the present time "Chao Chiengmai."

We do not, therefore, know the personal name of the founder of Ayut'ia.

It would appear that he was not the son, but the son-in-law, of the preceding Prince of Ut'ong. He is supposed to have been a scion of the family reigning at

<sup>1</sup> Most of the names of the Kings of Siam given in this book are titles rather than real names. It was not customary to refer to a King by his name during his lifetime, and in many cases the personal names of the Kings are not now known. Even the titles are often doubtful. Each King had his full style and title inscribed on a golden plate, but these were all lost when Ayut'ia was destroyed by the Burmese in 1767. The names or titles used in this book are those commonly used by Siamese historians.

Chiengsen, and was, therefore, related to the Kings of Chiengnai. It is probable that the old Prince of Ut'ong had no sons by his chief wife, but only a daughter. This daughter was married to the founder of Ayut'ia, who later became Prince of Ut'ong (P'ya Ut'ong) by the right of his wife, in preference to his brothers-in-law, the sons of inferior wives of the old Prince.

His predecessor, the former P'ya Ut'ong, had been a great warrior, and had acquired a considerable part of the dominions once ruled over by King Rank'anheng of Suk'ot'ai, including Nak'on Srit'annarat, Ratburi and P'otchaburi, as well as Tenasserim and Tavoy, which had been lost to Suk'ot'ai in 1318, and which Ut'ong had annexed about 1325.

The history of the rise of P'ya Ut'ong's power is very obscure, and it is impossible to say what portion of the domain which was under his control when he founded Ayut'ia had been acquired by him, and what portion had been inherited from his father-in-law.

The reasons which led to the foundation of Ayut'ia are likewise not known for certain. Legends are plentiful with regard to this question, but the truth appears to be that Ut'ong was abandoned owing to an epidemic. P'ya Ut'ong first settled to the south of the present town of Ayut'ia, but after three years he decided to build his capital on an island in the river. This was the beginning of the city of Ayut'ia, the ruins of which are familiar to all travellers to Siam. The sea was at that period much nearer to Ayut'ia than is now the case. The site chosen was not far from the ancient city of Ayodhya, which had been abandoned or destroyed.

P'ya Ut'ong, after founding Ayut'ia, assumed the title of Rama Tibodi, a title later borne by many other Kings of Siam, including His late Majesty.

At the time of the foundation of Ayut'ia, according to the Siamese annals, King Rama T'ibodi's dominions were of great extent, including the whole of the kingdom of Suk'ot'ai. We know, however, that this is an exaggeration. Suk'ot'ai though declining in power, was still an independent State; ruled over by King Loet'ai.

King Rama T'ibodi probably held sway over the districts of Ayut'ia, Lopburi, Sup'an, Ratburi, P'etchaburi, Nak'on Srit'ammarat, Singora, Chantabun (conquered from Cambodia) Tenasserim, and Tavoy. He had even extended his conquests as far as Malacca, and was thus the first King of Siam to rule over a Malay State.

Those who have visited the ruins of Ayut'ia and have seen the remains of mighty walls and ramparts, and the ruins of magnificent temples and pagodas, must not suppose that all these date from the time of King Rama T'ibodi I. In his time Ayut'ia was a very small city, with a wall of mud, and the buildings, including the Royal Palace, were constructed of timber. The brick wall, parts of which may still be seen, was built by King Chakrap'at (1548) and the Palace, the ruins of which are still discernible, dates from the time of King Trailokanat (1448).

Early in his reign as King of Ayut'ia King Rama T'ibodi installed his brother-in-law, Prince P'angoa, as Governor of Sup'an, with the title of Boromaraja Thao, and his own son, Prince Ramesuen, was appointed Governor of Lopburi. The King was only thirty-seven years of age at that time, so Prince Ramesuen must have been a mere lad.

It seems likely that King Rama T'ibodi, when still Prince of Ut'ong, had had occasion to measure his

<sup>1</sup> The walls of Ayut'ia were restored by King Prasat T'ong in 1634

strength against the waning power of the Cambodian Empire. However this may be, in 1352 we find him engaged in a war with Cambodia. A young monarch, named Boroma Lamp'ongsaraja, had recently succeeded to the Cambodian throne, and the King of Siam doubtless thought it a good opportunity to deal a blow at his eastern neighbour. He therefore placed his son, Prince Ramesuen, at the head of an army for the invasion of Cambodia.

The young Prince soon showed himself an incompetent commander. He allowed his army to become separated into two portions, with the result that his advance army, consisting of five thousand men, was attacked by the Cambodian forces, led by the Crown Prince of that country, and utterly routed.

The news of this reverse caused consternation at Ayut'ia, and Prince Boromaraja (P'angoa) was hurriedly despatched with another army to the assistance of his nephew. He defeated the Cambodians and invested their capital, which was taken after a siege of nearly a year. The King of Cambodia died during the siege, and the Crown Prince was set up as King, apparently as a vassal of Siam. He bore the title of King P'asat.<sup>1</sup>

In the year 1347, as related in the last chapter, King Loet'ai of Suk'ot'ai died, and his death was followed by disturbances in the northern kingdom. King Rama T'ibodi seized this opportunity to invade the Suk'ot'ai dominions, and captured the town of Jainat. The new King of Suk'ot'ai, T'ammaraja Lüt'ai, made no attempt to resist this aggression by force, but sent envoys to beg for the return of Jainat. This was agreed to, but history does not relate upon what conditions.

In the year 1357 two Princes of Ayut'ia, Chao Keo and Chao T'ai, died of cholera. This is the first mention of cholera in Siam. Would that it had been the last!

<sup>1</sup> According to Cambodian history, this King was a Siamese Prince—a son of King Rama T'ibodi.

King Rama T'ibodi was a great legislator.

We may assume that the Tai brought many of the legal customs of Nanchao into Siam with them, and it is not improbable that many laws had been committed to writing in Suk'ot'ai and elsewhere long before the foundation of Ayut'ia. The first Siamese laws of which we possess any definite knowledge are, however, those promulgated by King Rama T'ibodi I. Many of these laws have since been altered and extended by additions from the Code of Manu, which was introduced later from Burma, and was not altogether an improvement; but it may be taken that in their main principles the laws have not been greatly changed; and many of them are still in force at the present time.

To give a complete commentary on the laws of King Rama T'ibodi I would require a volume of some size. A few extracts and examples may, however, be of interest, as showing the general type of Siamese mediæval legislation.

The following laws are attributed to King Rama T'ibodi I.

I. The Law of Evidence (A.D. 1350).

The most curious feature of this law is the large number of classes of persons who were precluded from giving evidence, except with the consent of both parties to a case. These included: infidels, debtors of the parties, slaves of the parties, diseased persons, children under seven, old persons over seventy, backbiters, covetous persons, professional dancers, beggars, homeless persons, the deaf, the blind, prostitutes, pregnant women, hermaphrodites, impotent persons, sorcerers, witches, lunatics, quack doctors, fishermen, bootmakers, gamblers, thieves, criminals, and executioners.

It must have been rather hard on a man who happened

to be assaulted in the presence of an executioner, a bootmaker, and a hermaphrodite.

## 2. The Law on Offences against the Government (A.D. 1351).

This law provides very severe penalties for offences against the Government, but perhaps not so severe as those in vogue in Europe at the same period.

An official who stole Government money was liable to one of eight punishments: (1) death, (2) degradation, (3) twenty-five strokes with a rattan, (4) to be reduced to the position of a commoner, (5) a fine equal to three times the amount stolen, (6) a fine of double the amount stolen, (7) to refund the amount stolen, (8) to be suspended from his functions.

This law, however, showed care for the common people as well as for the King's Government. An official who oppressed or despoiled those subjected to his control was liable to be punished by death or by flogging, or to undergo other severe penalties.

## 3. The Law on Receiving Complaints (A.D. 1355).

This law provides fines for offences similar to Champerty and Maintenance.

It contains some curious provisions, e.g.: "If any worthless and unfilial man attempts to bring a case against his parents or grandparents, let him be soundly flogged as an example to others; and his claim shall not be admitted."

## 4. The Law on Abduction (A.D. 1356).

This law deals with offences such as the abduction of the wives, daughters, and more especially the slaves, of others. It is particularly interesting as showing that slavery was a widely spread and strongly established institution in King Rama T'ibodi's realm. As we have seen in Chapter III, the northern Siamese Kingdoms of



Suk'ot'ai discouraged slavery. It is not, therefore, surprising to find in the Law on Abduction a reference to the prevalence among slaves of a habit of escaping away to the dominions of the King of Suk'ot'ai.

5. The Law on Offences Against the People (A.D. 1357).

This law deals with offences such as trespass, assault, false imprisonment, and so forth. One section provides for the payment of damages in cases where property is lost during an affray. The effect of this may still be seen in Siam : a person who is assaulted is very apt to allege that his ring came off, or that his money rolled out of his pocket and was lost.

6. The Law Concerning Robbers (A.D. 1350 and 1366).

This law deals with robbery, burglary, arson, murder, and other serious crimes. It contains several wise provisions. Here is one : " If any person receive stolen property, knowing it to be stolen, let him produce the thief. Should he fail to do so, let him be punished as though he were himself the thief. "

Some of the punishments seem curious to-day. " If any person shall steal fish from a private pond or tank, let him pay a fine of 333,333 cowrie shells. " Let us hope that the thief was made to count the shells. .

7. The Law on Miscellaneous Matters (A.D. 1359).

This law deals with a great variety of subjects, such, for instance, as the theft of growing crops, diversion of irrigation ditches, cheating, etc. It also provides punishment for various kinds of witches, sorcerers, necromancers and harbourers of familiar spirits. The methods of these worthies, such as preparing love philtres, and burying small wax images of those whom they wished to destroy, seem to have been very similar to those of their confrères in England at that period.

## 8. The Law of Husband and Wife (A.D. 1359).

This law, as may be supposed, recognises polygamy. Most of its provisions, however, appear to be meant to apply to monogamous unions. Then, as now, polygamy was probably a luxury for the few.

Section 65. "If a husband and wife have a physical or mental distaste for one another and desire to be divorced, let it be as they wish; for they two have no further blessing on their union, and therefore should not be compelled to live together." Public opinion in the Western world tends more and more to take the same view of the matter.

On the whole, the laws of King Rama T'ibodi I were wise and just, judged by the standards of his time, and were well adapted to meet the needs of Siamese society as then constituted.

King Rama T'ibodi I died in 1369, at the age of fifty-seven. There is no other example in comparatively modern times of a founder of a powerful State concerning whom we possess so little knowledge. What was his name? Who was his father? Where was he born? We do not know. Nor do we know anything definite of his history until he founded Ayut'ia, being then aged thirty-seven. We can read his laws, and we can see the results of his conquests; but, considered as a man, he remains one of the mysteries of History.

## NOTE TO CHAPTER IV

The most probable conjecture as to the origin of King Rama T'ibodi I is that advanced by Prince Damrong, namely that he was a scion of a family which came down from the north (presumably from Chiengsen) and which set up an independent Principality on the site of the then deserted city of Nak'on Prat'om (P'rapat'om). As King Rama T'ibodi left his ancestral city and settled in the realm of his father-in-law, we may perhaps assume that he was a younger son.

## CHAPTER V

REIGNS OF KING RAMESUEN, KING BOROMARAJA I,  
KING T'ONG LAN, KING RAM RAJA, AND KING INT'ARAJA I

KING RAMA T'IBODI left the throne to his son, Prince Ramesuen, the Governor of Lopburi. The new King was unpopular, probably owing to the incompetence he had shown as a General in the Cambodian war. A year after his accession disturbances broke out which he was unable to quell, and he was urged by his Ministers to abdicate in favour of his uncle, Prince Boromaraja (P'angoa), the Governor of Sup'an. The matter was amicably arranged. Prince Boromaraja became King, and King Ramesuen reverted to his former position as Governor of Lopburi (1370).

King Boromaraja I was the fifth son of the former Prince of Ut'ong (Sup'an) and was the brother-in-law of King Rama T'ibodi I. His name, P'angoa, is a corruption of the prefix *P'o* (father) and *Ngoa*, an old word for five. At that time it was common to call children by numbers, even in noble or princely families.<sup>1</sup> *Ngoa* may be compared to the Roman name Quintus.

Shortly after ascending the throne, King Boromaraja sent an embassy to the Emperor of China. The power of the Mongol rulers of China had just succumbed to a series of blows dealt by the virtuous and illustrious

<sup>1</sup> This system of nomenclature was as follows: 1, Ai; 2, Yi; 3, Sam; 4, Sai; 5, Ngoa; 6, Lok; 7, Chet; 8, Pet; 9, Chao; 10, Chong. These same names are in use among the Shans at the present day, though most of them have fallen into disuse in Siam. There was a similar system for naming girls.

Hongwou, first Emperor of the Ming dynasty. This Emperor made Nankin his capital, and thither, in the year 1371, repaired the Siamese Ambassadors, with a letter announcing that King Boromaraja had taken over the government from his nephew, King Ramesuen, who was unable to control the people,

Cordial relations with China were continued throughout this reign. In the year 1373 a Siamese Princess, probably the mother of the ex-King Ramesuen, sent envoys to Nankin, who were well received by the Emperor and Empress; later, in 1384, the King's nephew, Prince Nak'on In' (later King of Siam), sent envoys with presents to the Imperial pair, who received them graciously, and despatched gifts in return.

In 1375 a son of the ex-King Ramesuen sent an embassy to Nankin, and in the same year Prince Nak'on In visited Nankin in person, and brought back an autographed letter from the Emperor to King Boromaraja.

While King Boromaraja was cultivating friendly relations with China, he was occupied nearer home in subjugating the dominions of his neighbour, the King of Suk'ot'ai.

The two Tai Kingdoms, as may be supposed, could not continue to exist side by side. The weaker was bound to succumb. The continual escape of slaves into the free State of Suk'ot'ai was doubtless a cause of friction.

Whatever the excuse for war may have been, we find King Boromaraja in 1371, shortly after his accession, invading Suk'ot'ai and capturing several towns. In 1372 he made further annexations, and in 1373 he invested Kamp'engp'et, the western outpost of the Suk'ot'ai

<sup>1</sup> This title means "Prince of Int'aburi." The town of Int'aburi, which still exists, was at that time under Sup'an.

dominions. The Governor of Kamp'engp'et was killed in the fighting, but the town was not taken.

In 1375 P'itsanulok, the second capital of the King of Suk'ot'ai, was captured, and a large number of prisoners "swept away"—doubtless into slavery.

In 1376 another attempt was made to take Kamp'engp'et. A Lao army was sent down from Chiengmai, under a leader named T'ao P'a Kong,<sup>1</sup> to assist the Governor of Kamp'engp'et. The Governor and the Lao General tried to lure the Siamese army into an ambush, but failed, and were driven away with great slaughter. In spite of this, the town of Kamp'engp'et was still able to resist, and remained untaken till the next year.

In 1378 Kamp'engp'et was once more attacked. This time the King of Suk'ot'ai was himself present. Realising the hopelessness of further resistance, he surrendered the city, and made submission to King Boromaraja.

This event marks the final extinction of the independent Kingdom of Suk'ot'ai. At the time of King Boromaraja's accession Suk'ot'ai was but a shadow of the Kingdom of King Ramk'amheng. Nevertheless, six invasions, extending over a period of eight years, were necessary before final success was obtained by the southern Kingdom.

The King of Suk'ot'ai, T'ammaraja II, was not deposed, but was left to reign over a portion of his former dominions as a vassal of Ayut'ia, with his capital at P'itsanulok. His descendants continued to reign there as vassal Kings for over seventy years more. The western part of the Suk'ot'ai dominions, including Kamp'engp'et, was annexed to Ayut'ia.

<sup>1</sup> P'a Kong was the ancient name of Nan.

· Suk'ot'ai having been disposed of, no impediment lay in extending Siamese influence to the Kingdom of Lannat'ai (Chiengmai). No good opportunity arose, however, until the last year of King Boromaraja's reign.

King Kū Na,<sup>1</sup> the ninth King of Chiengmai, died about 1387, and was succeeded by his son, Sen Müang Ma, a lad of fourteen. He had an uncle, Prince P'rohm, Governor of Chiengmai, who, needless to say, at once attempted to seize the throne. Failing in his attempt, he applied for the aid of King Boromaraja. The latter was only too pleased to grasp this opportunity of extending his power; he therefore espoused the cause of Prince P'rohm and despatched a Siamese army to attack Chiengmai.

The young Lao King had made full preparations, and had a large force waiting for the Siamese. A strenuous battle was fought at the village of Sen Sanuk, near Chiengmai, in which the Siamese were worsted. The Siamese army then retired through Müang Li.

In this battle a Chiengmai Princess, Nang Müang, distinguished herself by taking an active part in the fighting, wearing a man's clothes and riding an elephant. She was at that time well advanced in pregnancy, and shortly after the battle gave birth to a son, who was called Chao Kla Te T'ong (Prince Brave-from-the-womb).

This first invasion of Chiengmai was not a very successful one. Prince P'rohm relinquished his hopes of mounting the throne of Chiengmai, and became reconciled to the young King, his nephew, to whom he presented a very sacred image of Buddha, known as the P'rasingh or P'rasihing, which he had

<sup>1</sup> This ruler built the beautiful Wat Sut'ep temple on the Doi Sor'ep mountain near Chien sai.

compelled the Governor of Kamp'engp'et to deliver up to him.'

This image-stealing expedition of Prince P'rohm's to Kamp'engp'et had serious consequences for King Boromaraja. The latter set out to assist the Governor of Kamp'engp'et against Prince P'rohm, but was taken ill on the way, and died before he could be brought back to Ayut'ia (1388).

King Boromaraja I was a worthy successor to King Rama T'ibodi I, whose life-work he completed by the subjection of the Kingdom of Suk'ot'ai.

King Boromaraja I was succeeded by his son, T'ong Lan, a boy of fifteen. The ex-King, Ramesuen, Governor of Lopburi, immediately proceeded to Ayut'ia, seized the young King, T'ong Lan, and caused him to be executed, after a reign of only seven days.

The method presumably adopted in this case, as in later cases where it was thought necessary to get rid of a Royal personage, consisted in tying the victim in a velvet sack, and clubbing him to death with a club of sandal-wood. By this means, no menial hand was allowed to touch the Royal body. This mark of respect cannot, however, have afforded much comfort to the victim.

' This image' had an eventful history. It was cast in Ceylon early in the Christian Era. King Ramk'ambheng of Suk'otai sent an envoy to Ceylon to ask for it. It was despatched by sea, was shipwrecked, but swam or floated ashore at Nak'on Srit'amarat. It was taken to Jainat, whence it was removed to Ayut'ia by Boromaraja I, about 1378. In the same reign it was taken away by means of a stratagem, by a son of the Governor of Kamp'engp'et, and remained in that town until 1388, when Prince P'rohm obtained it by force, and took it to Chiangmai. About 1548 it was removed to Luang P'rabang, together with the Emerald Buddha and other very sacred images, by King Jai Jett'a. In 1556 it was sent back to Chiangmai. In 1662 King Narai took it to Ayut'ia. After the capture of Ayut'ia in 1767, the Burmese returned it to Chiangmai. The first King of the present dynasty caused it to be brought to Bangkok in 1795, and it is still in the museum there.

The P'rasingh now in Chiangmai is generally supposed to be a replica, cast about 1388. Some believe, however, that it is the original image, and that the one in Bangkok is the replica.

Judged by modern standards, the murder of this boy King, and other similar deeds which deface the annals of the Kings of Ayut'ia, were cruel and atrocious crimes. It must be remembered, however, that the law of succession in Siam was very vague, and it may have been thought better to sacrifice one life—even a King's life—rather than to run the risk of disturbances which might cause great bloodshed and throw the whole realm into confusion. In regard to this matter, moreover, the history of Siam has nothing to fear from comparison with that of neighbouring countries. As late as 1879, King Theebaw signalled his usurpation of the throne of Burma by the most brutal massacres of his many relatives. He murdered about as many Princes in a single day as were accounted for by all the Kings of Siam put together.

King Ramesuen thus resumed the throne, to which he was without doubt entitled, as being the son of the founder of Ayut'ia.

About two years after King Ramesuen's second accession, the young King of Chiangmai, Sen M'uang Ma, came down at the head of an army to assist the vassal King of Suk'ot'ai to throw off his allegiance. According to the Chiangmai chronicle, King T'ammaraaja requested the aid of the King of Chiangmai ; but this would appear to have been merely a ruse, for the Chiangmai army was suddenly attacked by night by the Suk'ot'ai forces, and dispersed with great loss. The young King of Chiangmai himself only just managed to escape through the faithfulness of two of his servants, who carried him on their backs, turn and turn about. As a reward, titles and land were conferred upon them, and they signalled their rise to greatness by setting up two figures of white elephants outside one of the gates of Chiangmai ; these can be seen there to the present day,



though doubtless often since restored.<sup>1</sup> This reverse kept Chiangmai quiet for the rest of the reign of King Ramesuen.<sup>2</sup>

In 1393, war broke out with Cambodia.<sup>3</sup> The King of Cambodia, Kodom Bong, was the aggressor. He suddenly invaded the Jolburi and Chantabun districts, and removed 6,000 or 7,000 of the population back to Cambodia.

King Ramesuen took prompt and forcible action. He at once assembled an army and invaded Cambodia. The Cambodian forces were utterly routed and the Siamese advanced to the capital, Angkor T'om. The King of Cambodia escaped by boat and his final fate is not recorded. The Crown Prince was captured, and a grandson of King Kodom Bong, named Sri Suriyo P'awong, was set up as a vassal King, under the tutelage of the Siamese General, P'ya Jai Narong, who remained in Cambodia with a garrison of five thousand men.

No less than 90,000 Cambodians were taken away as prisoners to Siam.

<sup>1</sup> According to some authorities, however, these elephants are of much more modern origin, having been set up by Prince Kawila in 1780.

<sup>2</sup> The P'ongsawadan, except the earliest version (Luang P'rasoet's history), gives a detailed account of an invasion of Chiangmai by King Ramesuen. The wall of Chiangmai was battered down by a big cannon. The King of Chiangmai demanded a truce, which he treacherously made use of to repair the damage. The city was then taken by force, and a son of the King, named Nak Srang, was set up in his place. A large number of prisoners were taken.

It seems impossible that these events can really have taken place. King Sen M'uang Ma of Chiangmai succeeded to the throne during the reign of King Boromaraja I of Siam. He was not set up by the Siamese, who, on the contrary, supported a rival claimant, Prince P'rohm. The date of King Sen M'uang Ma's death is variously given, but the earliest possible date was six years after the death of King Ramesuen. The next King of Chiangmai, Fang Ken, was likewise not set up by the Siamese, who again supported a rival candidate.

The literary style in which this alleged invasion of Chiangmai is related is quite out of keeping with that used in describing other events of the period. The story is an interpolation. It is probably a description of some quite different war at a much later date. The name Nak Srang is rather suggestive of Cambodia.

<sup>3</sup> Cambodian war. According to Cambodian history, this invasion took place in A.D. 1357, during the reign of Rama T'ibodi I. It is inserted here on the authority of Prince Damrong.

Firearms are stated to have been used in this war.<sup>1</sup>

A great procession was held at Ayut'ia in honour of these victories, and suitable rewards and promotions were awarded to the successful leaders.

Cambodia did not recover from this blow for some time. She remained quiet for almost fifty years.

King Ramesuen died in 1395, having reigned, since his second accession, for seven years. He was about sixty-two years of age at the time of his death. He had shown himself, when young, an incompetent General, and it is probable that his later victories were the work of P'ya Jai Narong. The murder of his nephew, King T'ong Lan, is a blot on his memory; even if such an act could be justified on grounds of policy, King Ramesuen might well have remembered how much more nobly King Boremaraja I had acted towards himself on his abdication, and spared the son out of gratitude to the father.

Aphantom King, Ram Raja, the son of King Ramesuen, now succeeded to the throne. He reigned for fourteen years, during which time nothing whatever is recorded as having occurred.

In 1408 King Ram Raja quarrelled with his principal Minister, whose arrest he ordered. The Minister fled to Sup'an, and appealed for assistance to Prince Nak'on In, the Governor of that town, a nephew of King Boremaraja I. The Prince proceeded to Ayut'ia, seized King Ram Raja, and forced him to abdicate. He then proclaimed himself King, with the title of King Int'araja I.

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that firearms cannot have been known in Siam at this time. Chiangmai history first mentions firearms as having been used at the siege of P'ayao in 1411. Burmese history tells us that cannon were used at the siege of Martaban in 1354. In Chinese history a weapon, supposed to have been a cannon, is said to have been used at the siege of Yuentai in 747.

Cannon were used by the English at the siege of Cambrai in 1350, and had been known in Europe for several years previously.

The author does not regard it as impossible that cannon should have been used in Siam in 1390.

King Ram Raja was treated as a harmless nonentity, and was permitted to live in retirement until his death.

King Int'araja I was the son of one of the younger brothers of King Boromaraja I, and had succeeded his father as Governor of Sup'an.

On attaining the throne, the new King overwhelmed with honours the Minister whose action had brought about his elevation. He gave him one of his daughters in marriage, and invested him with all kinds of gold ornaments and insignia of rank.

In 1411 King Sen Mūang Ma of Chiengmai died. His two sons, Prince Yi Kumkam and Prince Fang Ken, fought for the succession, and the unsuccessful candidate, in this case Prince Yi Kumkam, appealed to Siam for aid. An army, commanded by the vassal King T'amaraja III of Suk'ot'ai, was despatched to Chiergmai to place Prince Yi Kumkam on the throne.

The Siamese first invested P'ayao, but failed to take it. This attack on P'ayao is interesting, as affording the first mention in the Chiengmai annals of the use of cannon. It is said that the Siamese erected a mound twenty-four yards high in order to shoot into the city. The people of P'ayao therefore melted down the brass tiles on one of their temples and made a five-inch cannon, wherewith they destroyed the Siamese fort.

The Siamese abandoned the siege of P'ayao and went on to Chiengrai. After resting there for some time, they advanced on Chiengmai. The siege of Chiengmai lasted for some time. Finally the young King of Chiengmai suggested that the matter in dispute should be submitted to trial by single combat. Each side was to choose a champion; if the Siamese champion won, King Fang Ken would abdicate in favour of his brother; if the Lao champion were the victor, Prince Yi Kumkam would

abandon his claim. These terms were accepted, and the two champions were chosen. They fought for several hours without result, but at last the Siamese champion received a scratch on his big toe, and was adjudged the loser.

This siege was also memorable owing to the pluck of a young lad named P'etyot. He collected a band of two hundred boys and youths on the Doi Sut'ep mountain and continually harassed the Siamese army. After the siege, the King of Chiangmai was so delighted with P'etyot, that he appointed him to be P'ya Dekjai (Lord Little-Boy) a title which survives in Chiangmai even to the present time.

The Siamese army retreated; it can, however, hardly be said that the spirit of the compact made with the Laos was observed, for it retreated northwards, and attacked the town of Chiengrai, which was captured. A large number of prisoners were taken back to Ayut'ia.

In the year 1410 the vassal King of Suk'ot'ai died. His death was followed by serious disturbances, caused by the claims of two Princes, Ban Müang and Rama, to the right of succession.<sup>1</sup> King Int'araja, at the head of his army, advanced to Nak'onsawan; the show of force was sufficient, and the differences between the two Princes were composed. It is not known which of them was appointed King, or Governor, of Suk'ot'ai.

King Int'araja, as we have seen, had visited China before he became King, and during his whole reign he maintained friendly intercourse with the Emperor Yonglo (third of the Ming dynasty). Several embassies were sent to China, and several Chinese envoys visited Ayut'ia during this reign.

<sup>1</sup> T'amaraja II of Suk'ot'ai had died about 1409. This was T'amaraja III, a youthful King. The two Princes who claimed the throne were probably his brothers. See chapter iii.

King Int'araja had three sons, named according to the numerical system already referred to. We might call them Princes Primus, Secundus and Tertius. On their father's death, in 1424, the two elder sons proceeded to fight for the throne. They and their adherents met on a bridge in the city of Ayut'ia, and the two Princes, mounted on elephants, engaged in personal combat. The result was that both of them were thrown from their elephants and killed. The youngest brother was then proclaimed King without opposition, under the title of Boromaraja II (1424).

## CHAPTER VI

### REIGNS OF KING BOROMARAJA II AND KING BOROMA TRAILOKANAT

KING BOROMARAJA II, whose accession to the throne of Siam was due to such an extraordinary event, proved to be a warlike and capable monarch.

In 1431 war broke out with Cambodia. The Siamese invaded that Kingdom and invested the capital, which was taken after a siege of seven months. The King of Cambodia, T'ammāsok, died during the siege, and the King of Siam set up his own son, the Prince of Int'aburi, as King of Cambodia.

After the retirement of the Siamese army, the Prince of Int'aburi, died—according to Cambodian history he was murdered—and a Cambodian Prince was appointed King, with the title of Boromaraja T'irat Rama T'ibodi apparently without opposition on the part of the Siamese. This King of Cambodia moved the capital to Phnom Penh.

King Boromaraja II brought back from Cambodia, after the invasion, a quantity of bronze images of animals, including one of a sacred cow. He also captured a vast number of prisoners.

In 1438 Prince Ramesuen, eldest son of King Boromaraja II, was appointed Governor of P'itsanulok; this

*1* Visitors to Angkor Wat and Angkor T'om sometimes wonder why the ancient Cambodian capital was abandoned. The reason is simple. It was dangerously near the Siamese frontier. Phnom Penh was not the capital of Cambodia for long, being superseded by Lowek. In the nineteenth century Phnom Penh again became the capital, and remains so till the present time.

marks the final incorporation of the Kingdom of Suk'ot'ai with southern Siam. Up to that date it had been treated as a vassal Kingdom, and had been governed by members of the family of P'ra Ruang.

In 1442 war broke out with Chiengmai. King Fang Ken of Chiengmai had ten sons, named on the numerical system previously referred to. The sixth son, Chao Lok (Prince Sextus) quarrelled with his father, rose against him, and forced him to abdicate. He then made himself King under the title of Maharaja Sri Sut'am Tilok. The title of "Maharaja" was used by many of the Kings of Chiengmai.

His youngest brother, Chao Sip, also called Chao Joi, the Governor of Müang Fang, disapproved of these proceedings. He removed the old King to Müng Fang and declared war on Maharaja Tilok. After a sanguinary struggle, Müang Fang was taken, the old King was removed back to Chiengmai, and Prince Joi fled to T'oén. The Governor of T'oén espoused his cause, and appealed to the King of Siam for aid; Prince Joi was killed in an attack on T'oén which was made by Maharaja Tilok before the hoped-for aid was forthcoming; but King Boromaraja II nevertheless at once proceeded to invade the Chiengmai dominions.

The Governor of T'oén was removed to Chiengmai and beheaded.

The Siamese army advanced towards Chiengmai, taking many prisoners on the way. Some of these prisoners were employed to look after the elephants, and this circumstance enabled the Laos to practise a ruse on the Siamese. A number of spies allowed themselves to be taken prisoners. In the night they cut off the tails of as many elephants as possible. Needless to say, the result was a stampede, which threw the Siamese

army into complete confusion. The Chiangmai troops attacked at this favourable moment, and inflicted a severe defeat on the Siamese.

The King of Siam fell ill at the same time, and the expedition was therefore abandoned, having met with very little success.

King Boromaraja II died in 1448. According to an ancient historical poem,<sup>1</sup> his death occurred while returning from some campaign. We learn from Lao history that at about this time Maharaja Tilok of Chiangmai made war on the Prince of Nan, who fled to Ayut'ia to seek for aid there. King Boromaraja II presumably responded to this appeal, but died before he and his army had had time to proceed very far.<sup>2</sup>

Prince Ramesuen, Governor of P'itsanulok, now became King, and assumed the title of Boroma Trailokanat. He was only seventeen years of age at the time of his accession, having been born during the Cambodian war of 1431.

This King was a man of very religious tendencies. His first act, on ascending the throne, was to convert the royal pavilions of his predecessors into a temple, and to build two new pavilions, in the same grounds, for secular use.<sup>3</sup> He then cremated the remains of King

<sup>1</sup> The "Yuen P'ai."

<sup>2</sup> In 1448 King Boromaraja II was engaged in an expedition concerning which the true facts are not known. The earliest history, Luang Prasert's, written in 1938, says: "In that year the King went to Prab P'ak, and made his camp at Pat'ai K'asen. At that time he took many prisoners. The royal army then returned." The later editors have assumed that this was another war with Chiangmai, and have inserted "Chiangmai" instead of "Prab P'ak." Chiangmai history is silent about any such expedition, and represents the Maharaja of Chiangmai as being engaged at that time in war with Nan and Luang Prabang.

"Prab P'ak" may mean "to subdue the confederates," but this seems a meaningless phrase. Probably "Prab P'ak" is a corruption of the name of some place which cannot now be identified. The Prince of Nan appealed to Siam for aid. The "Prab P'ak" expedition may have been the result of this appeal, in which case "Prab P'ak" is probably some place in the north-east of Siam.

<sup>3</sup> It was the custom, on the death of each King, to convert into a temple, or chapel, the pavilion in which he had resided.



Rama T'ibodi I, which had been kept embalmed, and built a Pagoda' to enshrine the ashes of that monarch, as well as a temple to mark the site of the cremation.

Until the time of King Trailok, the different provinces of the Kingdom, whether presided over by Princes or by officials of lower rank, had been governed more or less like small independent States, levying their armies, controlling their own finances, and managing their own internal affairs. King Trailok made the first attempt at centralisation. At the same time he brought about a separation between the civil and the military administration, which had previously been closely interwoven. He raised the rank of the principal officials at Ayut'ia, and placed them in charge of different *Departments* for the control of the affairs of the whole Kingdom.

For the civil administration, five Departments were instituted, namely: (1) the Ministry of the Interior, under an official who held the rank of Prime Minister; (2) the Ministry of Local Government, which was in charge of the affairs of the Province of Ayut'ia; (3) the Ministry of Finance; (4) the Ministry of Agriculture, in charge of cultivation, food supplies; and matters connected with the tenure of land and (5) the Ministry of the Royal Household, in charge of Palace affairs and the administration of Justice.

For the military administration, a separate Prime Minister, the Kalahom, was set up, with several officials under him, ranking as Ministers, and in charge of different military Departments. Most of the titles of these Military officials are still in use to-day, e.g. P'ya Sriharat Dejo, P'ya Ramk'ambheng, etc.

1 A separate pagoda was built in the Royal Palace Temple at Ayut'ia to enshrine the ashes of each of the earlier Kings. Later on, the space available being insufficient, a pagoda containing a number of niches was erected, to contain the remains of a large number of Kings. This pagoda may still be seen at Ayut'ia.

-Another very important measure which Siam owes to King Trailok may conveniently be mentioned here, though not brought into force until 1454. This was the law regulating Sakdi Na grade. As mentioned in chapter i., the Tai, even in the most ancient times, possessed a system whereby every man was allowed to hold a certain amount of land, regulated in accordance with his position. King Trailok laid down definite rules on this subject. Every Prince, official, and private person, had a certain amount of land allotted to him. For instance, the Chao P'yas, or P'yas holding important posts, were allowed to hold from 1,000 to 4,000 acres. Subordinate officials, such as K'uns and Luangs, held from 160 acres upwards. Common people held 10 acres.

This system not only definitely fixed the relative rank of every man in the Kingdom, but it actually placed a value upon him. He was literally "worth" so and so much. If he had to be fined for any offence, the fine was graded according to his Sakdi Na, and if compensation had to be paid for his death or for any injury, this was likewise computed on the same scale.

So far as officials were concerned, the Sakdi Na represented their pay. They were expected to live on the produce of their land, and therefore received no salaries.

Since the time of King Chulalongkorn, all officials have been paid salaries in cash and are not, therefore, given any land. Nevertheless, they still receive a nominal rank based on an assumed grant of land. The system of King Trailok thus survives to the present day, in theory if not in practice.

King Trailok was also responsible for another remarkable piece of legislation, namely the 'Palace Law' ( Kot

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that this law is really a compilation of regulations dating from much more ancient times. In its original form, it was divided into three parts: (a) Ceremonies; (b) Functions of officials; (c) Punishments.

Mont'ien Ban) promulgated in 1450. This law is still nominally in force at the present day. It commences by enumerating the neighbouring States which sent tribute to Ayut'ia, in the form of gold and silver trees. Students of the history of this period will be surprised to find that Hsenwi, Kengtung, Chiengmai and Taungu were claimed as tributary States.

The relative rank of different classes of Queens and Princes is regulated by this law; the office of Maha Uparat, referred to later in this chapter, is mentioned as being confined to a son of the Chief Queen. All kinds of palace ceremonials are dealt with, and the proper programmes for observance on various feast days and holidays are laid down.

Severe punishments are provided for all kinds of offences against the Palace Law; these include:

For immoral intercourse with a lady of the Palace : the man to be tortured for three days and then killed : the woman to be killed.

For introducing amatory poems into the palace: death.

For shaking the King's boat: death.

For a palace official who permits stray animals to come to the palace: death. The sentry on duty at the time to have his eyes put out.

For kicking the door of the palace : the offender's foot to be cut off.

For striking the King's elephants or horses: the hand to be cut off.

For abusing them: the mouth of the offender to be cut.

For whispering during a Royal audience : death.

For other minor offences severe flogging was inflicted.

This law also provides for the punishment of Royal culprits. Princes of high rank were shackled with gold

fetters; those of lesser rank wore silver fetters. The procedure to be followed when a Prince was beaten to death with a sandalwood club is likewise carefully set forth.

King Trailok had not been long upon the throne before he was involved in a war with Chiengmai, which lasted, with intervals, throughout his whole reign.

The cause of this war was probably the dissatisfaction felt by some of the inhabitants of the former Kingdom of Suk'ot'ai at the abolition of the authority of their own Royal Family, which had taken place in the preceding reign. In 1451 P'ya Yut'it T'ira, the Governor of Sawank'alok, determined to revolt against the King of Siam, and secretly applied to Maharaja Tilok of Chiengmai for assistance, offering to become tributary to him. The Maharaja at once seized this chance of dealing a blow at Siam, and despatched an army to the south. The Lao army attacked Suk'ot'ai, but was repulsed with great loss. In a later engagement they were more successful, but the King of Luang P'rabang, who was at the time on very bad terms with Maharaja Tilok, seized the opportunity of invading the Chiengmai dominions. The news of the incursion caused the Lao army to retire.

A second Chiengmai army had been sent to Kam-p'engp'et. That city was captured and was annexed for a time to the Chiengmai dominions.

During the next few years hostilities between Ayut'ia and Chiengmai were perforce suspended. The Maharaja had his hands full with the Luang P'rabang war, and the King of Siam was likewise occupied with other matters.

P'ya Jalieng. There has been much discussion as to the identity of the ancient town called Jalieng. It is, however, impossible to study the histories of Siam and of Chiengmai at all carefully without coming to the conclusion that Jalieng was identical with Sawank'alok.

In 1454 his Kingdom was ravaged by a terrible outbreak of smallpox, and in 1455 a military expedition was made to Malacca.

As already mentioned, Malacca had been subject to Siam since the time of King Ramk'amheng. It may be assumed, however, that Siamese control was of a more or less shadowy nature. The Malays were originally Buddhists, but Mohammedanism was introduced before the tenth century, and by the time of King Trailok it was the prevailing religion at Malacca. It is possible that the people of Malacca were encouraged to rebel by their Arab co-religionists, who had started to form settlements in the Peninsula. The town was captured, but subsequent events go to show that Siamese control was not effective for long.

In 1460 the Governor of Sawank'alok's treachery became known, and he therefore fled to Chiengmai, and was appointed by Maharaja Tilok to be Governor of P'ayao. Encouraged by him, in the following year (1461), a Lao army was sent by the Maharaja to invade Siamese territory. They captured Suk'ot'ai and invested P'itsanulok. News of an invasion of Yunnanese from the north caused them to retire, but Suk'ot'ai remained in the hands of the Maharaja until the year 1462, when it was retaken. Sawank'alok became for a time part of the Chiengmai dominions.

As a result of these constant incursions from Chiengmai, King Trailok determined to establish his capital at P'itsanulok. He therefore appointed his elder son, Prince Boromaraja, to be Governor or Regent of Ayut'ia, and proceeded in 1463 to P'itsanulok, accompanied by his younger son, Prince Int'araja. P'itsanulok remained the capital of Siam for about twenty-five years.

Maharaja Tilok, far from being overawed by this step,

at once invaded Siam, and attacked Suk'ot'ai for the third time. He was repulsed with great loss and was pursued by the Siamese, led by the King and Prince Int'araja, far into the interior of his own territory. The Siamese advance guard caught up the Chiengmai army near Doi Ba, that rocky hill so well remembered by visitors to Chiengmai before the completion of the railway. There a fierce battle was fought by moonlight, in which the young Prince Int'araja, then aged about fifteen, showed great courage. Riding on an elephant, and accompanied by the Governors of Kamp'engp'et and Suk'ot'ai, also on elephants, he attacked four elephants ridden by the ex-Governor of Sawank'alok and three noted Chiengmai warriors. He and his companions were driven down, on their elephants, into a swamp, and the Prince received a bullet wound in the cheek. The Prince and his troops were finally forced to retreat and rejoin the main army of King Trailok. Prince Int'araja presumably died from the effects of his wound, as his name appears no more in history after this time.'

Neither side had as yet been entirely successful. The Siamese retreated, and for a few years peace was observed.

About this time, the turncoat Governor of Sawank'alok made preparations to rejoin the Siamese side. A great part of the city of Sawank'alok was burnt down by the Laos in consequence, and the Governor was seized and exiled to a distant part of the Chiengmai dominions. The Maharaja's uncle, Mūn Dong Nak'on, the Governor of Chiengjūn,<sup>2</sup> was placed in charge of Sawank'alok.

In 1465 King Trailok entered a Buddhist monastery

<sup>1</sup> The Chiengmai history gives the date of this battle as 1457. At that time Prince Int'araja could not have been more than ten years old. The correct date appears to be as given here.

<sup>2</sup> Probably a city which stood near the present village of Mūang Long, in Lamp'an Province.

as a priest. He was doubtless inspired to take this step not only by his own inclinations, which had always been religious, but also by the example previously set by King 'Panmaraja Lüt'ai of Suk'ot'ai. For a crowned head to receive the tonsure of a priest was a rare event, and created some stir in the Buddhist world. Neighbouring potentates sent envoys to attend the ordination ceremony. The Maharaja of Chiengmai despatched an Ambassador to P'itsanulok, accompanied by twelve priests of great sanctity. They were very well received by King Trailok, and assisted at his ordination, which took place at Wat Chulamani at P'itsanulok.

This *rapprochement* was, however, only apparent. King Trailok demanded the surrender of Sawank'alok. This was refused, and on the completion of the Siamese monarch's term in the priesthood, which lasted for eight months, both sides again prepared for war.

The Maharaja's uncle, Mūn Dong Nak'on, collected an army on the frontier, with the intention of invading Siam whenever a suitable opportunity arose. King Trailok, on the other hand, following the superstitious customs of that age, determined to employ occult means for the purpose of weakening his adversary.

In 1467 a Burmese priest was sent by the Siamese King to Chiengmai. This man, by his apparent sanctity and learning, managed to ingratiate himself with Maharaja Tilok, and found occasion to urge him to build a new palace, overlooking the city wall of Chiengmai. In order to prepare the site, it was necessary to fell a certain sacred tree which had been planted by King Mengrai. The Maharaja, encouraged by the priest, caused this tree to be felled. A series of frightful misfortunes then befell him. One of his wives accused his eldest son, Prince Bun Ruang, of rebellious designs. The young

Prince was executed. Later, a faithful official was similarly accused and was punished by death.

In 1468 a Siamese embassy visited Chiengmai. The chief envoy was a Brahmin. Some of the actions of this person excited suspicion; he and his party were arrested, and, on being flogged, confessed that they had buried in various parts of the city seven jars containing magic ingredients. They also divulged the fact that the Burmese priest who had advised the cutting down of the sacred tree was a Siamese spy.

Maharaja Tilok thus found, when too late, that he had caused his son and his faithful servant to be executed on false charges. This he ascribed to the felling of the sacred tree. To his grief was added terror, on the discovery of the seven jars full of magic herbs and talismans. These were burnt, ground to powder, and the powder cast into the river. The Burmese priest and the Brahmin followed them, with stones tied to their feet. The other envoys were dismissed, but had not gone far when they were set upon by troops despatched ahead for the purpose, and massacred to a man.

They had drastic methods in those days for dealing with foreign representatives who abused their privileges.

In 1471 a female white elephant was captured in Siam. This appears to have been the first white elephant owned by a King of Siam since the foundation of Ayut'ia, though, as has been seen, the Kings of Suk'ot'ai had possessed some of these animals.

In 1472 a third son was born to King Trailok. He was named Prince Jett'a, and later became King Rama T'ibodi II.

In 1474 war broke out once more with Chiengmai. Mūn Dong Nak'on, the Maharaja's uncle, died about



this time, and a new Governor was appointed to Chieng-jün. The Siamese suddenly invaded Chiengmai territory, captured Chiengjün, and killed the Governor. At the same time, Sawank'alok was taken. Maharaja Tilok succeeded in recapturing Chiengjün, but Sawank'alok remained in the hands of the Siamese.

The result of a war which had lasted, off and on, for twenty-three years, was that both parties found themselves in exactly the same position as they were in when hostilities first started. In 1474 the old Maharaja, tired of the purposeless struggle, made overtures for peace. Nothing definite appears to have been settled, but open hostilities ceased for several years.

In 1484 King Trailok's youngest son, Prince Jett'a, together with the eldest son of Prince Boromaraja, became Buddhist priests. They left the priesthood in the following year and Prince Jett'a was then appointed Maha Uparat.

This is the first time that the office of Maha Uparat is specifically mentioned in Siamese history, though there is every reason to suppose that it had been customary to confer the title upon one of the sons or brothers of the reigning monarch. The title, meaning literally "Second King" or "Vice King" originated in India, and became common among all the Indo-Chinese nations, including the Burmese. The Uparat held a position higher than any other Prince, and was invested with some of the appurtenances of kingship. Among the Siamese and Burmese, the Uparat was usually the eldest son of the King and Queen, but many Kings appointed their brothers or other relations to the post, more especially in cases where their own sons were

<sup>1</sup> In the Sakdi Na Law (1557) the office of Maha Uparat is referred to. The Maha Uparat held 1,000 acres of land ten times as much as the highest officials.

either very young or were not born of mothers of high rank. Among the Laos, it was, and is (for the title is still in use in northern Siam), unusual to appoint a son of the reigning King or Prince to be Uparat. The choice almost invariably fell on a brother.'

The Maha Uparat was, in fact, the Crown Prince.

It is not clear why King Trailok appointed Prince Jett'a, his younger son, to be Maha Uparat, but it seems probable that he intended Prince Boromaraja, who was already Regent of Ayut'ia, to become King there, and that Prince Jett'a was Uparat for the northern dominion of P'itsanulok only. If this was King Trailok's plan, namely to dismember his Kingdom, it was a very unwise one. Fortunately, it was not carried into effect after his death.

In 1486 war broke out once more with Chiengmai. This was due to Maharaja Tilok's action in having all the members of a Siamese embassy massacred. He probably remembered the incident of the magic pots, and was very suspicious of visitors from the south.

The Siamese invaded Chiengmai territory, but no important engagements took place, and in the following year (1487) Maharaja Tilok died. He was seventy-eight years of age, and had reigned for forty-four years. He was in every way a most remarkable man. A bad son, a harsh and unnatural father, a tyrant to his people, and a relentless foe to the Siamese, he yet appears to have been a man of strong religious principles. A Buddhist Council was held at Chiengmai in his reign, and he did much in every way to foster religion. It was during his tenure of power that the famous emerald

/ Several European writers, e. g. van Vliet, have asserted that the legal heir to the throne of Siam was always a brother of the King. This is a mistake, caused by the fact that the Uparat living at the time when the statement was made happened to be a brother of the reigning King.

Buddha, now to be seen in the Royal Palace at Bangkok, was brought to Chiengmai. According to the most probable account, this truly remarkable image was discovered at Chiengrai in 1436, in the interior of a pagoda which had been struck by lightning. It was taken to Nak'on Lamp'ang, and thirty-two years later (1468) was removed to Chiengmai. In 1470 it was placed by Maharaja Tilok in a temple specially erected for its reception.'

In 1488 Prince Boromaraja captured Tavoy,<sup>2</sup> which became a bone of contention between Burma and Siam for hundreds of years.

King Trailok did not long survive his ancient foe, Maharaja Tilok. He died at P'itsanulok in 1488, aged fifty-seven, after a reign of forty years.<sup>3</sup> He appears to have been a very capable and politic ruler. His natural religious feelings doubtless made him averse to warfare, but the restless ambition of Maharaja Tilok forced him to spend most of his reign in fighting against Chiengmai.

Many of the actions of King Trailok were influenced by an evident desire to imitate King Ramk'ahheng of Suk'ot'ai. One of his wives, the mother of King Rama T'ibodi II, was a Princess of the Royal Family of Suk'ot'ai.

<sup>1</sup> King Jai Jett'a removed this image from Chiengmai to Luang P'rabang in 1597. It was taken to Wiengchan, where it remained till 1779, when Chao P'ya Chakri (Rama I) removed it to Bangkok.

<sup>2</sup> It is not certain whether Tavoy was at this time an independent principality, or was subject to Siam, and had rebelled. There is no reason to suppose that it belonged to Burma.

<sup>3</sup> According to some versions of Siamese history, King Trailokanat died in the year when he left the priesthood (correct date 1465) and was succeeded by his son Int'araja, who reigned for 22 years, and was in turn succeeded by his son (not brother) Rama T'ibodi II. The best authenticated account is that given here and in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VII

REIGNS OF KING BOROMARAJA III,  
KING RAMA T'IBODI II, KING BOROMARAJA IV,  
KING RATSADA AND KING P'RAJAI

KING TRAILOK was succeeded by his elder son, who is known as King Boromaraja III. He was already Regent of Ayut'ia, and on his accession P'itsanulok ceased to be the capital. Prince Jett'a, the Maha Uparat, remained at P'itsanulok as Viceroy or Governor.

King Boromaraja died in 1491, at the age of about 45, and was succeeded by his brother, Prince Jett'a, who assumed the style of King Rama T'ibodi II. He was descended, through his mother, from the Royal Family of Suk'ot'ai.

This King was born in 1472, and was therefore only nineteen years of age when he ascended the throne. His first act was to cremate the remains of his father and elder brother and to erect pagodas for the reception of their ashes. These pagodas may still be seen in Wat Srisarap'et at Ayut'ia.

In 1492 trouble again arose with Chiengmai. A Siamese Prince, named Suriwong, went to Chiengmai and became a priest there. He managed to obtain possession of a very sacred image of Buddha, made of white crystal. This was an image which had been taken from Lamp'un by King Mengrai in 1281. Legend asserted that it had belonged to Cham T'ewi, a mythical Queen of Lamp'un, supposed to have lived in the seventh century A.D. Prince Suriwong smuggled this

image away to Ayut'ia. The Maharaja of Chiengmai, P'ra Yot, the grandson and successor of Maharaja Tilok, demanded its return. Meeting with an evasive answer, he invaded Siam and compelled King Rama T'ibodi to deliver up the Buddha.'

In 1499 King Rama T'ibodi gave orders for a gigantic image of Buddha to be cast, and erected in Wat Srisarap'et. This image represented Buddha in an erect attitude. It was 48 feet high, and the pedestal was 24 feet in length. It was covered with gold plates weighing in all nearly 800 lb., and took more than three years to complete. This was the largest standing image of Buddha recorded as having ever existed in the world. It was destroyed by the Burmese in 1767. The first King of the present dynasty had the broken pieces brought to Bangkok in the hope of joining them together; this was found impossible, so they were buried under the pagoda named Jedi Srisarap'etchadayan, in Wat Jetup'on at Bangkok.

In 1507 war broke out anew with Chiengmai. Maharaja Yot had been deposed in 1495, on account of his reign "bringing ill luck upon his country." This was due to his having been crowned on a Monday, which was an unpropitious day. He was succeeded by his son, known as Maharaja Ratana. This ruler attacked Suk'ot'ai in 1507. A very sanguinary battle was fought, in which the Laos were worsted and driven back. In 1508 the Siamese retaliated by invading Chiengmai territory. P're was captured, but after a fierce battle the Siamese were forced to retreat; in 1510 another Siamese invasion was attended with similar results.

*I Siamese history makes no mention of this invasion. It may be regarded as very doubtful that a Loutian army ever reached Ayut'ia.*

King Rama T'ibodi II was the first King of Siam who is known to have received European envoys and to have concluded treaties with a European power.

In 1497 Vasco da Gama made his celebrated voyage to India round the Cape of Good Hope. In the succeeding years the Portuguese, with most extraordinary rapidity, obtained possession of large tracts of territory in India, and by 1508 they already began to turn their eyes farther east. In that year four Portuguese vessels, under the command of Lopes de Sequiera, arrived at Malacca. The town was then governed by a Malay Sultan, nominally a vassal of Siam, but in reality independent. Sequiera entered into negotiations with a view to opening up trade relations; a dispute ensued; Sequiera arrested certain Malays who were on board his ships; the Sultan retaliated by killing some of the Portuguese on shore, and imprisoning others. Sequiera, having too weak a force to attack Malacca, retired, and reported the matter to Affonso d'Albuquerque, the famous Viceroy of Portuguese India.

In June 1509 Albuquerque arrived, with a considerable force, off Malacca. After fruitless negotiations for the surrender of the Portuguese prisoners, Malacca was attacked and captured. The Malay population fled, and the Portuguese returned to their ships.

Albuquerque, having learnt that the Siamese claimed some rights over Malacca, determined to send an envoy to Ayut'ia to explain matters. Taking advantage of the presence of some Chinese junks which were about to leave for Ayut'ia, he sent one Duarte Fernandez, with a letter addressed to the King of Siam.

In September 1509 a fresh attack on Malacca becam

necessary. The city was subdued and became a Portuguese possession.

Fernandez arrived at Ayut'ia in 1511. He was well received, and returned accompanied by a Siamese Ambassador. No objection appears to have been raised to the occupation of Malacca. It may probably have been thought better to forego the somewhat shadowy claims of Siam in the Peninsula, rather than become involved in disputes with the Portuguese, which would hamper the Kingdom in defending the northern frontier against the continual aggressions of the Maharaja of Chiangmai.

A second Portuguese envoy, Miranda de Azevedo, visited Ayut'ia, by the overland route, about 1512, and in 1516 a third envoy from Albuquerque, named Duarte de Coelho, proceeded to Ayut'ia and concluded a fresh treaty with Siam.

The final result of these treaties was that the Portuguese were permitted to reside and carry on trade at Ayut'ia, Tenasserim, Mergui, Patani and Nak'on Srit'ammarat.

The broad-minded policy of King Rama T'ibodi II with regard to foreign traders has been emulated by every King of Siam since his time.

King Rama T'ibodi II also set a noble example in regard to another matter, namely religious toleration. He permitted Coelho to erect a wooden crucifix in a prominent place in Ayut'ia. Not many European monarchs of that period possessed such a liberal mind. The whole history of Siam, in fact, is an object-lesson to Europeans in the matter of religious tolerance, and the Siamese may well be proud that their annals are not stained with the record of such atrocious crimes as were committed in every country of Europe in the name of

Him who said: "This is My commandment, that ye love one another."

While King Rama T'ibodi was engaged in these negotiations with the Portuguese, he was also occupied in fighting against Chiengmai. In 1513 a Chiengmai General, Mūn P'ing Yi, carried out a raid on Suk'ot'ai and Kamp'engp'et, capturing prisoners, elephants and other booty. In 1515 the operation was repeated Suk'ot'ai and Kamp'engp'et being taken by the Laos.

The King of Siam was, however, ready for them. Accompanied by his sons, Prince Ek and Prince At'itya, he drove back the Northern invaders, and followed them with his victorious army as far as Na'kon Lam-p'ang. A fierce battle was fought on the banks of the Me Wang River; the Laos were defeated and Nak'on Lam-p'ang was stormed by the Siamese. Together with other booty, a celebrated image of Buddha, carved out of black stone, was removed to Ayut'ia.

This was the most serious blow which had been dealt to Chiengmai for many years. It may be, perhaps, that the advice and assistance of King Rama T'ibodi's Portuguese Allies had something to do with his rapid and striking successes.

In 1518 King Rama T'ibodi undertook the reorganisation of the system of military service. As has been seen (chapter i.), the ancient T'ai people had a system of compulsory military service, which had been in force since the earliest times. This system was now remodelled. The whole Kingdom was divided up into Military Divisions and Sub-Divisions, and every man of eighteen years or more was enrolled, and was made liable to be called up when required. As may be supposed, a large

*1* The so-called persecution in the reign of King P'etrāja (1688) was in reality a political movement against the French.



majority of those liable to military service were never called up, but were permitted to spend their lives in civil occupations. The principle of universal service was, however, recognised. The system of King Rama T'ibodi II remained in force, with modifications, until the year 1899, when a new law for compulsory military service, drawn up on European lines, was introduced.

In 1518 a book on military tactics was issued. This work has long since been lost, and its exact nature is not now known.

In the year 1518 a canal, navigable for sea-going vessels, was dug, connecting the Samrong and Tapnang canals and debouching near the present town of Paknam.

In 1524 some kind of conspiracy was discovered, resulting in the execution of several officials. In 1526 there was a severe famine. In the same year Prince Noh P'utt'angkun, the King's eldest son, was appointed Maha Uparat, and sent north as Governor of P'itsanulok.

In July 1529 King Rama T'ibodi II was suddenly taken ill, and died the same day, at the age of fifty-seven, after a reign of forty years. His was a noteworthy reign. Its chief features were: Striking successes against Chiengmai, the reorganisation of the Siamese army, and the opening up of relations with the Western world.

The next King (named Noh P'utt'angkun) bore the title of Boromaraja IV. The only event known to have occurred in his reign was the despatch of envoys to negotiate a Treaty with Chiengmai. This King died of smallpox in 1534, leaving the throne to his son, Prince Ratsada, a child of five.

Baby Kings did not reign for long in Ayut'ia. Five months after his accession, King Ratsada was made

away with, and Prince P'rajai, a half-brother of King Boromaraja IV, reigned in his stead.

Nothing is known of this King before his usurpation of the throne, but there is some reason to suppose that he was Governor of P'itsanulok.

The first few years of this reign were peaceful ones. The King was busy carrying out a scheme for improving the navigation of the River Menam at Bangkok. Before his time the course of the river followed the canals which are now known as K'longs Bang Luang and Bangkok Noi. The present river from Ta T'ien to T'a Chang Wang Na was dry land. King P'rajai caused a channel to be dug across this neck of land, which in a few years became the main waterway.

To this period (1536) belongs a curious piece of legislation, the Law for Trial by Ordeal. As is well known, trial by ordeal was common in Europe at that time; nothing, indeed, is more natural and fitting to a simple-minded people, firmly imbued with faith in Divine justice, than to leave the decision of their disputes to the arbitration of some Being wiser and less fallible than a human judge. Unfortunately, experience has shown that Divine Beings cannot be relied upon to vindicate the principles of justice whenever called upon to do so; this, however, is a comparatively new discovery; in King P'rajai's time, and later, ordeal was a very popular form of trial.

The Law for Trial by Ordeal provides for several kinds of ordeal. One method consisted in walking over red-hot charcoal; the party whose feet were burnt was adjudged the loser. Another system was by diving under the water; the man who stayed under the longer won the case. Sometimes the parties were made to swim a race across the river; sometimes they lit candles

of equal size, and the man whose candle went out first was the loser. The Law lays down most minute regulations as to the procedure to be followed for every kind of ordeal, and provides long prayers to be read out by the Clerk of the Court, begging for the intervention of the heavenly powers to secure justice.

At the time of King P'rajai's accession the number of Portuguese in Siam had greatly increased, and in 1538 the King engaged 120 of them to form a kind of body-guard and to instruct the Siamese in musketry. The reason for this step was the aggressive policy of the King of Taungu, who had seized various towns on the Siamese frontier.

Burma was divided up, during the reign of King Boromaraja IV of Siam, into four Kingdoms, namely: (1) the remnants of the original Kingdom, with the capital at Ava; (2) Prome; (3) Pegu; (4) Taungu. In 1530 the King of Taungu died, and was succeeded by his son, Tabeng Shwe T'i. This monarch was a man of insatiable ambition, and determined to subjugate the dominions of all his neighbours. In A.D. 1530 he conquered Prome and in 1534 he proceeded to attack Pegu. That country he finally subdued in 1540, in which year he established his capital at Hanthawadi.

During his war against Pegu, Tabeng Shwe T'i came into conflict with the Siamese. He occupied a town referred to in Siamese history as Chiengkrai or Chiengkran (now called Gyaing, in the Moulmein district), which was then subject to Siam. King P'rajai, at the head of a strong army, attacked the Burmese, utterly defeated them, and drove them out of his dominions. In this expedition he was assisted by his Portuguese mercenaries: they did such good service that they were rewarded with various commercial and residential

privileges.' It is interesting to note that the King of Burma likewise had a large number of Portuguese in his service. The Portuguese of that day, like true soldiers of fortune, were ready to fight for anybody against anybody.

This success against Burma proved in the end to be a disaster for Siam. It was the original cause of the bitter enmity between the two countries which later led to long and sanguinary wars, bringing death, famine and unspeakable misery to both countries. It is not too much to say that the evil results of the feud between Siam and Burma may be seen in both countries even at the present day.

In 1545 King P'rajai was called upon to intervene in the affairs of Chiengmai. The history of the northern Kingdom for some years previous to this had been very troubled. In 1538 King Mūang Kesa, the 15th King of Chiengmai, was deposed by his son, T'ai Sai K'am. The latter reigned until 1543, when a rebellion broke out, caused by his cruelty and misgovernment. He was killed, and King Mūang Kesa was restored. In 1545 he became insane, and a conspiracy was hatched against him, headed by one Sen Dao. The King was murdered, and with him the direct male line of King Mengrai became extinct. Sen Dao offered the throne to the Prince of Kengtung, who refused it. It was then offered to Prince Mekut'i of Mūang Nai, a descendant of Prince K'rua, one of the sons of King Mengrai, the founder of Chiengmai. In the meantime, however, a party of nobles hostile to Sen Dao met at Chiengsen, and sent an envoy to ask the King of Luang P'rabang to accept the Chiengmai throne for his eldest son, Prince Jai

/ The ruins of the houses and the church given by King P'rajai to the Portuguese can still be seen at Ayut'ia.

Jett'a, whose mother was a Chiengmai Princess. The King of Luang P'rabang assented, with the probable intention of uniting Chiengmai to the Luang P'rabang dominions.

At the same time, the Prince of Hsenwi sent an army to invade Chiengmai for the purpose of punishing Sen Dao for the murder of King M'uang Kesa. Failing to take the town of Chiengmai, M'ün Hoa K'ien, the Hsenwi General, established himself at Lamp'un, and despatched messengers to ask for the aid of King P'rajai.

King P'rajai at once prepared to invade Chiengmai territory; before he had completed his preparations, however, the notables opposed to Sen Dao came down from Chiengsen, succeeded in entering the city of Chiengmai, and at once executed Sen Dao and all his chief adherents. They then set up a Princess, named Maha Te-j, as Regent of Chiengmai, pending the arrival of Prince Jai Jett'a from Luang P'rabang.

King P'rajai arrived at Chiengmai in June A.D. 1545, only to find that the ostensible object of his expedition, namely to remove Sen Dao, no longer existed. The Princess Regent received the Siamese monarch in a friendly manner. He spent some time at Chiengmai, and enjoyed a few days rest at Wieng Chet Lin, near the present stone quarries. In September he returned to Ayut'ia.

In the same year a terrible fire occurred at Ayut'ia. Many temples and public buildings were destroyed, together with 10,050 houses. Assuming that not more than one-third of the city was destroyed, and allowing five inmates to each house, we may conclude that Ayut'ia contained over 150,000 inhabitants. It was, therefore, a larger city than the London of that period.

Hardly had King P'rajai returned back home when Prince Mekut'i of Müang Nai, supported by the Prince of Yawngphwe, invaded Chiengmai territory. As we have seen, Prince Mekut'i was a candidate for the throne of Chiengmai, which was then being held by the party in power, on behalf of Prince Jai Jett'a of Luang P'rabang.

The Müang Nai and Yawngphwe armies were driven out by the Princess Regent. Later, a Luang P'rabang force arrived to assist in holding the city for Prince Jai Jett'a.

King P'rajai determined upon a second expedition to the north. The Governor of P'itsanulok was sent ahead with a strong force. The advisers of the Princess Regent of Chiengmai hotly debated the question as to whether martial resistance should be made to the Siamese, or whether they should be received as allies. The Princess gave her casting vote in favour of the latter course. Envoys were sent out to receive the Governor of P'itsanulok, who pitched his camp near Lamp'un. At dead of night, however, the Siamese suddenly burst into Lamp'un, and burnt down a great part of the city.

The next day King P'rajai arrived with his army, and the Siamese advanced to Chiengmai. The destruction of Lamp'un caused the Princess Regent of Chiengmai to determine on resistance. A fierce attack was made on the city, but after three days' fighting the Siamese failed to capture it. King P'rajai decided to retire, which he did, after destroying some temples and a large number of houses near Chiengmai. A Lao army pursued the Siamese and defeated them at Wat Chiengkrung

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that the Princess Regent had applied to King P'rajai for aid against Pr. . M . ' i

(in the district now known as Sarap'i), five miles from Chiengmai, many prisoners being taken.

The retreat continued through Müang Li. The Prince of Nan, Yi Mangkala, assisted by Chiengmai and Nak'on Lamp'ang troops, again attacked the retreating Siamese, defeating them with great loss. The Governors of Kamp'engp'et and P'ijai were killed in this battle. Farther south, another Lao army lay in ambush. The Siamese were once more attacked near the P'un Sam Mün' stream and were once more routed, this time with the loss of three Generals, 10,000 men, and 3,000 boats.

After these serious disasters, King P'rajai returned to Ayut'ia. He had been in bad health for some months, and died about June 1546. Pinto states that he was poisoned by his wife, Princess Sri Suda Chan, and the subsequent actions of that infamous woman were such as to justify the accusation.

King P'rajai obtained the throne by means which are repugnant to our moral sense. We must, however, refrain from applying to Siam in the sixteenth century the standards of Europe in our own time. If we believe Pinto, King P'rajai was a wise ruler, well beloved by his people and deeply mourned by them when he died. "This Prince lived in the reputation of being charitable to the poor; liberal in his benefits and recompenses, pitiful and gentle towards everyone, and above all incorrupt in doing of justice and chastening the wicked; his subjects spoke so amply thereof in their lamentations, as if all that they said of it was true; we are to believe that there never was a better King than he, either amongst these Pagans, or in all the countries of the world."

<sup>1</sup> Probably the stream now called the Me Pan Mün, in the Mün - Li district.

## NOTE TO CHAPTER VII

The above account of King P'rajai's wars with Chiengmai is taken from the Chiengmai history. This is the only complete and coherent account in existence. *Luang P'rasoet's History* is not in conflict with the Chiengmai version; in particular, all mention of Chiengmai having been captured on the second expedition (as interpolated in later versions of Siamese history) is omitted.

Pinto professes to have accompanied King P'rajai on his second expedition to Chiengmai. As, however, the Portuguese adventurer states he was shipwrecked near Pulo Condor in December 1547, *after* which he came to Siam, and elsewhere asserts that he resided in Siam from 1540 till 1545, it is impossible to place any reliance in his chronology. In Cogan's translation (London, 1653) an attempt has been made to correct Pinto's chronology, but without much success.

Pinto's description of the war with Chiengmai is a mere incoherent jumble, made up from the accounts given to him by some of his compatriots who had accompanied King P'rajai on both expeditions. He mentions a Queen Regent, evidently meant to be Maha T'ewi of Chiengmai, but he places her in an independent country, called Guipen, with its capital at Guitor. This Queen Regent was subdued and made to pay tribute. After dealing with her, King P'rajai went on to Chiammay, situated near a lake called Singpamor.

Pinto speaks of 40,000 horses and 4,000 elephants, and is guilty of other gross exaggerations. For these reasons it is quite impossible to treat him as a serious witness. Congreve, the Restoration dramatist, refers to Pinto as one of the most famous of the world's liars. Congreve was not far wrong.



## CHAPTER VIII

### REIGN OF KING KEO FA, USURPATION OF K'UN WORAWONGSA, AND REIGNS OF KING MAHA CHAKRAP'AT AND KING MAHIN

King P'RAJAI appears to have possessed no wife ranking as Queen. The Prince-s whom Pinto accuses of poisoning him held the title of T'ao Sri Suda Chan, a style reserved by the Law of Sakdi Na' for one of the four senior non-Royal Consorts of a King. By this lady King P'rajai had two sons, Prince Keo Fa,<sup>2</sup> born about 1535, and Prince Sri Sin, born about 1541.

It is not clear what arrangements, if any, were made by King P'rajai as to appointing a Regent. It would have been most unusual to nominate a female for that position, and King P'rajai had a younger half-brother, Prince T'ien Raja, who would have been the most natural person to appoint. However this may be, we find, not long after the accession of the young King Keo Fa, that the conduct of affairs was in the hands of his mother, and that Prince T'ien had retired to the shelter of a monastery.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> Called in some histories Yot Fa.

<sup>3</sup> This period of Siamese history is obscure, and the various accounts differ from one another and are not always consistent in themselves. Pinto was a contemporary observer, but his narrative is, unfortunately, filled with demonstrably incorrect statements. For instance, he asserts that Prince T'ien (King Maha Chakrap'at) had, at the time of his accession (1541), been a Buddhist priest for over thirty years. We know, however, that Prince T'ien was at that time about forty-two years old, and had several more or less grown-up children. Pinto also states that Princess Sri Suda Chan was pregnant when King P'rajai died. If this was so, it is difficult to understand how she could have become Regent.

The account here given appears to the author to be the most probable one.

King P'rajai had not been long dead when the Princess Regent fell passionately in love with a young man named P'an Sri But T'ep, who held a petty official appointment. He was nothing loath to respond to her amorous advances, and ere long found himself transferred to a post in the palace, with the title of K'un Jinarat.

As a result of this intrigue, the Princess Regent gave birth to a daughter, and the infatuated woman, finding further concealment impossible, determined to put a bold face upon the matter by making her lover Regent.

It so happened that certain disturbances occurred at this time in the northern provinces of the Kingdom. The Princess Regent took advantage of this to obtain the consent of her Ministers to raise a considerable body of troops for the purpose, as she pretended, of protecting the person of the young King. K'un Jinarat was entrusted with the duty of enlisting the troops. He filled the capital with troops officered by men in whom he thought he could trust to acquiesce in the projected plot.

The next step was to remove dangerous opponents. P'ya Maha Sena, an aged nobleman, who was known to disapprove of the Princess Regent's proceedings, was treacherously stabbed in the back, and others shared a similar fate. Pinto, with his usual exaggeration, asserts that hardly a nobleman was left alive.

Having cleared her Council of all but a few subservient reptiles, the Princess obtained their consent to the appointment of K'un Jinarat as Regent during the minority of King Keo Fa, with the title of K'un Wora-wongsa.

The young King was now over thirteen years of age, quite old enough to understand and disapprove of his mother's conduct. We may easily suppose that he showed

his resentment in one way or another. K'un Worawongsa therefore decided to make away with him. The exact manner of his death is uncertain. The earliest account merely says that "something happened to him." Later histories say that he was executed. The probability is that he was poisoned, as stated by Pinto. Certain it is that before the end of the year 1548 the short reign and the short life of this unfortunate little King both came to a sudden end.<sup>1</sup>

On November 11th, 1548, K'un Worawongsa was publicly crowned as King of Siam, and his brother, Nai Chan, was appointed Uparat.<sup>2</sup>

It seems extraordinary that anyone could have imagined that the nobility and people of Siam would tamely submit to this audacious usurpation of the throne by a worthless ruffian, whose sole claim to distinction was that he had attracted the eye of an abandoned woman. As may easily be supposed, a conspiracy was at once hatched against him. The ringleader was one K'un P'iren.<sup>3</sup> This young man had royal blood in his veins, his mother being a relative of King P'rajai, and his father a descendant of the Kings of Suk'ot'ai.

K'un P'iren held a secret meeting with three of his friends. They determined to kill the usurper and to place on the throne Prince T'ien, who, as we have seen, had taken the wise step of donning the yellow robe when he saw the direction in which events were tending after his brother's death.

Having ascertained that Prince T'ien was prepared

<sup>1</sup> Prince Damrong is unwilling to believe that King Keo Fa's mother was privy to his murder, as stated both by Pinto and in the *Pongsawadan*. But it seems impossible to set a limit to the bounds of human depravity.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Damrong doubts whether it was intended to divert the succession to such an extent as this, and suggests that Nai Chan was appointed Chao Phya Maha Uparat, a high title of nobility sometimes conferred, and quite distinct from the royal title of Maha Uparat, or Crown Prince.

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards King Maha T'amaraja of Si

to assume the crown if all went well, the four conspirators next sought for a supernatural omen. They went at dead of night to a temple, and there lighted two candles, one representing the usurper and the other Prince T'ien. They made a vow that if Prince T'ien's candle went out first, they would abandon their enterprise. It so happened that K'un Worawongsa's candle was mysteriously extinguished when burning its brightest. This was taken as a sign of Divine approval, and the conspirators determined to proceed with their design.

Early in January, 1519, a very large elephant was observed near Lopburi. K'un Worawongsa ordered that it should be driven into a corral, and announced his intention of proceeding by boat to Lopburi on January 13th to see the animal caught.

K'un P'iren went on ahead, and initiated the Governors of Sawank'alok' and P'ijai into his plans. One of the conspirators, Mūn Rajasenha, was told off to deal with the pseudo-Uparat, Nai Chan. The other five waited, each in a separate boat, to intercept the barge of K'un Worawongsa and the Princess in a narrow creek leading to the corral. When the royal barge appeared in the creek, the conspirators surrounded it. "Who bars my way?" cried K'un Worawongsa. K'un P'iren stood up in his boat, holding a drawn sword, and replied in a terrible voice: "I do; prepare to die!" The trembling usurper and his guilty partner were dragged ashore and beheaded, together with their infant daughter. Their bodies were impaled and left as a meal for the vultures.

The little Prince Sri Sin, son of King P'rajai, had

<sup>1</sup> This Governor of Sawank'alok' was a Cambodian Prince who had been adopted by King Prajai. P'into speaks of him as King of Cambaye.

accompanied his mother. He was given into the keeping of Prince T'ien.

In the meantime, Mūn Rajasenha had been waiting behind a tree for Nai Chan, who was riding to the corral on an elephant, and accounted for him with a well-aimed bullet.

Only four lives were sacrificed in this liberation of Siam from the rule of a low-born scoundrel, namely the lives of the usurper and his brother, of the Princess, and of her baby. We may spare a moment's pity for the little child; but doubtless K'un P'iren felt that it was his duty to extirpate all that hateful brood.

Prince T'ien was brought forth from his monastery, and on the 19th of January, 1549,<sup>1</sup> was crowned as King of Siam, with the title of Maha Chakrap'at.

The new King's first act on attaining the throne was to shower unprecedented honours and rewards on those who had elevated him. In particular, he bestowed upon K'un P'iren the hand of his eldest daughter in marriage, and conferred upon him the high title of Somdet Maha T'ammaraaja, with the position of Governor of P'itsanulok. The rank and title of the former K'un P'iren were, in fact, almost those of a feudatory King.

King Tabeng Shwe T'i of Burma had not failed to take due note of the violent changes which had taken place in the Kingdom of Siam. He felt that this was a good opportunity to add Siam to the number of his vassal States. Taking some petty frontier incident as an excuse, he therefore invaded Siam early in the year 1549, at the head of a very powerful army. Siamese history gives the numbers of the King of Burma's

<sup>1</sup> The day of the month, as well as that of the coronation of K'un Worawongsa, is taken from Pinto. The year given by Pinto is 1546, which is certainly wrong.

forces on this occasion as 300,000 men, 3,000 horses and 700 elephants.'

The Burmese army advanced by way of M̄artaban, Kanburi and Sup'an. Little serious opposition was met with, and by June Tabeng Shwe T'i was encamped in the neighbourhood of Ayut'ia.

The siege lasted, according to Pinto, who professes to have been in Ayut'ia at the time, for almost four months. The fighting was extremely fierce. Several times the Burmese came near to forcing an entry into the city, but were always repulsed.

Not only King Chakrap'at and his sons took part in the fighting, but likewise his wife, Queen Suriyot'ai, and one of his daughters. These two valiant women, wearing men's armour and mounted on elephants, fought bravely side by side with the men. In attempting to rescue the King from a dangerous position, Queen Suriyot'ai and her daughter were both pierced through by Burmese spears, and fell dead from the backs of their elephants.

The Burmese army was badly equipped, and the soldiers suffered great privations and distress. Added to this, news reached the Burmese monarch that Maha T'ammaraja was about to descend from P'itsanulok at the head of a large army. Moreover, he received tidings of disturbances in Burma. He therefore determined to retire. In a rearguard action he was fortunate enough to capture Maha T'ammaraja, the King's son-in-law, as well as Prince Ramesuen, the King's eldest son.

*These figures seem high, but Pinto more than doubles them. He tells us that the Burmese army consisted of 800,000 men, 40,000 horses and 5,000 elephants. There were 1,000 cannon, drawn by 10,000 yoke of buffaloes and rhinoceroses! The King of Burma, after taking Suk'ot'ai, proceeded direct to Ayut'ia via Tilau, described as being on the coast, between Puket and Kedah. One is left wondering whether Pinto was the most untruthful writer in the world, or merely*

King Chakrap'at sent to beg for the return of these two Princes. This was agreed to on two conditions ; firstly, that the Burmese army should be allowed to retire un molested, and secondly, that two very celebrated elephants should be delivered to the King of Burma. The two elephants were sent, but they were so unmanageable that they threw the whole Burmese army into confusion. They were, therefore, restored to the Siamese, and Tabeng Shwe T'i returned to Burma without even so much as a couple of elephants to show as a result of his expedition.

King Chakrap'at, having had one taste of a Burmese invasion, wisely set to work to prepare his Kingdom for another. In 1550 he began to build brick walls and fortifications round Ayut'ia, to replace the old mud wall of King Rama T'ibodi I. He further strengthened the defences of the city by causing an exterior moat to be dug, in addition to the already existing moat. He then proceeded to dismantle the defences of several frontier towns which were thought difficult to hold, and were more likely to serve as bases for the enemy than as defences to the capital.

At this time, moreover, the system of calling up men for military service was reorganised, and the fleet of river warships was enlarged, and was improved by the introduction of a new type of vessel.

The towns of Nont'aburi, Nak'on Jaisri, and T'achin were also founded at this period, together with other towns, to be used as recruiting centres.

King Chakrap'at had great faith in elephants as a fighting arm, and he spent most of his spare time during the next few years in catching these animals. Between the years 1550 and 1562 he captured nearly three hun-

dred elephants.'

The Kings of Cambodia filled, with regard to Siam, a similar rôle to that filled by the Kings of Scotland with regard to England in the Middle Ages. Whenever Siam was in difficulties, Cambodia was certain to be troublesome. During the siege of Ayut'ia in 1549 the King of Cambodia, Chandaraja, carried out a raid on Prachim. This necessitated a punitive expedition in 1551, which was apparently successful. In 1556 war with Cambodia broke out again. A Cambodian Prince, named P'ya Ong, who had been adopted by King P'rajai of Siam and made Governor of Sawank'alok, was placed in command of the Siamese forces.<sup>2</sup> He allowed his army to become separated from the supporting fleet of boats. As a result, he was defeated with great loss, and was himself slain in the conflict. No attempt appears to have been made to repair this disaster.

In the year 1561 a serious rebellion occurred. The younger son of King P'rajai, Prince Sri Sin, had been adopted and brought up by King Chakrap'at. On reaching the age of thirteen or fourteen he had been ordained as a Buddhist novice. Shortly after his ordination he was accused of plotting against the King, and was therefore kept under strict supervision until the year 1561. As he was then nineteen years of age, King Chakrap'at gave orders that he was to be ordained as a Buddhist priest. The Prince escaped, gathered his adherents together, and made a surprise assault upon the capital by night. After defeating the Commander of the King's troops in single combat, he forced his

<sup>1</sup> Chinese history relates that in 1553 the King of Siam sent a white elephant for the Emperor Si Chong Hong Te (eleventh of the Ming dynasty). The elephant died on the journey, but its tusks and tail were taken to the Emperor.

<sup>2</sup> This was probably the Governor of Sawank'alok who took part in the conspiracy against K'un Worawongsa.



way into the palace. The King escaped by boat; but his two sons, Prince Ramesuen and Prince Mahin, assembled their forces and attacked Prince Sri Sin's adherents. The young Prince was killed, fighting bravely to the last. Most of his adherents were apprehended and executed.

Prince Sri Sin deserves to be called one of the heroes of Siamese history. Few will doubt but that this gallant youth, who died sword in hand, fighting bravely for his father's throne, would have made a better King than his rival, the miserable Mahin. Had Prince Sri Sin succeeded in his enterprise, Siam might possibly have been spared the degradation into which she sank only a few years later.

We must now retrace our steps for a few moments to consider the course of events in Burma. Tabeng Shwe T'i, after his retreat from Siam in 1540, fell under the influence of a Portuguese named Diego Suarez, who encouraged him to drink in excess. The King became quite unable to govern, and in 1550 was assassinated. Burma then fell into great confusion, and was once more split up into several small States; but Bhureng Nong, the brother-in-law of Tabeng Shwe T'i, proclaimed himself King, and by 1555 had established his control over Taungu, Pegu and Ava.

Bhureng Nong next picked a quarrel with Chieng-mai. The ruler of Chiengmai at that time was Maharaja Mekut'i, who had been summoned to the throne in 1549. In 1556 the Burmese monarch was engaged in

Prince Jai Jett'a was crowned as Maharaja of Chiengmai shortly after King P'rajai's second expedition and death (1547). He only remained in Chiengmai for two years, and then returned to Luang P'rabang to fight his younger brother, who had assumed the crown of Luang P'rabang on the sudden death of their father. It was on this occasion that King Jai Jett'a removed from Chiengmai the emerald Buddha, the crystal Buddha of Lamp'un, the P'rasingh, and other particularly sacred images. None of them were returned except the P'rasingh.

King Jai Jett'a announced his intention of remaining at Luang P'rabang; the Chiengmai nobles therefore held that the throne was vacant, and summoned the rival candidate, Prince Mekut'i of Müang Nai, to become Maharaja. (1549)

an expedition against some of the Shan States, and he accused Maharaja Mekut'i (himself a Prince of Müang Nai) of assisting the Shans. Chiengmai was besieged by a strong Burmese army, and was taken, after only a few day's resistance, in April, 1556. Thus fell, never to rise again, the independent Tai Kingdom of Chiengmai or Lannat'ai, two hundred and sixty years after its establishment by King Mengrai.

Maharaja Mekut'i was permitted to rule as a vassal of the King of Burma, and a Burmese army of occupation was left at Chiengmai.

By the irony of fate, the efforts made by King Chakrap'at to capture elephants for the defence of his country were the indirect cause of the second Burmese invasion. Among the animals captured were no less than seven white elephants. The King was persuaded to adopt the title of "Lord of the White Elephants." The King of Burma saw in this as good an excuse as any other to precipitate war. He therefore sent envoys to demand two of the white elephants.

King Chakrap'at consulted his advisers. Some held that it was better to surrender a couple of white elephants than to plunge the country into war; others, headed by Prince Ramesuen, advised the King that it would disgrace him in the eyes of the whole world if he were to submit tamely to so unreasonable a request; moreover, they argued, submission would only encourage the King of Burma to put forward still more outrageous demands. In the end, an unfavourable reply was sent to Bhureng Nong, who thereupon at once declared war.

Bhureng Nong, as has been seen, was far more powerful than any of his predecessors had been. His control over Chiengmai placed him in a position so favourable for carrying out an invasion of Siam that the

result was almost a foregone conclusion. Moreover, the northern provinces of Siam were at that time ravaged by pestilence and afflicted by famine, and were, therefore, in no condition to offer a very strenuous opposition to an invader.

In the autumn of the year 1563 the King of Burma advanced into Siam with an army said by the Siamese historian to have numbered 900,000 men, including troops not only from Burma, but also from Chiengmai and other Lao States. Kamp'engp'et was invested and was easily taken, the Maharaja of 'Chiengmai assisting with a fleet of boats. Suk'ot'ai made a stout resistance, but could not withstand the superior force of the Burmese. Sawank'alok and P'ijai capitulated. P'itsanulok, then a prey to famine and pestilence, fell after a short siege.

Maha T'ammaraaja, King Chakrap'at's son-in-law, accompanied Bhureng Nong on his march to the south, together with an army of 70,000 men from the northern Siamese provinces. Willingly, or unwillingly he thus openly ranged himself on the Burmese side.

The Siamese, aided by a few Portuguese free-lances, made two attempts to stay the progress of the immense Burmese army, but were defeated and driven back.

The Burmese reached Ayut'ia in February 1564. The King of Siam was quite unable to raise a sufficient force to offer any effective resistance. After the Burmese had directed a cannonade against the city, the population, realising that they were almost helpless, pressed the King to come to terms with the invaders. Their demands were supported by those nobles who from the first had been in favour of surrendering the white elephants. A conference was accordingly held between the two monarchs in person.

The terms imposed by the King of Burma were

onerous. Prince Ramesuen, P'ya Chakri and P'ya Sunti'orn Songk'ram, the leaders of the war party, were to be delivered up as hostages, an annual tribute of thirty elephants and three hundred *catties* of silver was to be sent to Burma, and the Burmese were to be granted the right to collect and retain the customs duties of the port of Mergui—then the chief emporium of foreign trade. In addition to this, four white elephants were to be handed over, instead of the two originally demanded.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that the terms imposed might have been even harsher, but for the fact that the tidings of a rebellion at home caused Bhureng Nong to be desirous of returning to Burma as soon as possible. Leaving an army of occupation in Siam, he hurried back by way of Kamp'engp'et.

Hardly had the King of Burma left Ayut'ia when a serious rebellion broke out, led by the Rajah of Patani. The Rajah had raised an army, supported by a fleet of two hundred boats, to fight the Burmese. Finding that he had arrived too late, and observing that the King of Siam was very ill-prepared for resistance, he attempted to seize the throne. King Chakrap'at, for the second time in his reign, fled from his palace in a panic. The rebellion was, however, successfully suppressed.

Some time before the second Burmese invasion, King Jai Jett'a, of Luang P'rabang, who had then recently established a new capital at Wiengchan (Sri Satan-akonahut), sent to ask for the hand of Princess T'ep Krasatri, one of the daughters of King Chakrap'at and the warrior Queen Suriyot'ai. The Siamese King agreed to this marriage, although he had already given one of his

<sup>1</sup> Burmese history relates that King Chakrap'at himself, as well as Prince Ramesuen, was taken to Burma as a hostage. Prince Damrong has cited very strong reasons for believing this to be incorrect. The truth can never now be known for certain.

daughters in marriage to King Jai Jett'a. When the time came for the Princess to leave for Wiengchan, she was unwell, so King Chakrap'at sent another of his daughters, by a different wife, in her stead. The King of Wiengchan, whose taste in collecting Princesses seems to have been equal to his discrimination in amassing other people's images of Buddha, was very annoyed. As soon as the Burmese had retired, and communication with Ayut'ia was possible, he sent back the unwanted Princess, with a message asserting his intention to accept Princess T'ep Krasatri, and no other.'

In April 1564 Princess T'ep Krasatri finally set out for Wiengchan. Maha T'ammaraja of P'itsanulok had, however, not been reckoned with. He had informed the King of Burma about the business which was on foot. Burmese troops were, we may assume, easily available in various parts of Siam. The Princess was intercepted by a Burmese force near P'etchabun, and carried off to Burma.

From this time onwards the King of Wiengchan and the Governor of P'itsanulok lost no opportunity of injuring one another.

Later in the same year (1564) Bhureng Nong discovered that Maharaja Mekut'i of Chiengmai was plotting to regain his independence. The Burmese therefore reoccupied Chiengmai and took the Maharaja back to Burma, leaving Princess Maha T'ewi as Regent of Chiengmai. As has been seen, this lady had already been Regent once before, at the time of the invasions by King P'rajai. (1546-7.)

Bhureng Nong was accompanied on this expedition to Chiengmai by Prince Ramesuen of Siam. The young Prince fell ill and died on the journey.

<sup>1</sup> Prince Damrong places these events a little later, namely about 1565, after the Burmese invasion of Wiengchan. The author has followed the two oldest versions of Siamese history.

Some of the confederates of the Maharaja fled to Wiengchan. Thither they were pursued by the Crown Prince of Burma. King Jai Jett'a escaped to the jungle, leaving his capital at the mercy of the Burmese, who removed to Burma his brother and all his wives, including a daughter of King Chakrap'at.

At the end of the year 1565 King Chakrap'at appointed his son, Prince Mahin, to be Regent, and retired into private life.

The task of the Regent was no easy one, and Prince Mahin was a man of little ability, and quite incapable of dealing with the difficult problems which faced him. Maha T'ammaraja interfered in every detail of the administration and opposed every measure which appeared to be contrary to the interests of the King of Burma.

One P'ya Ram, Governor of Kamp'engp'et, being dissatisfied with Maha T'ammaraja's policy, came to Ayut'ia, and became before long the chief adviser of the Prince Regent. His influence was strongly anti-Burmese.

P'ya Ram conceived the plan of regaining control over the northern provinces with the assistance of the King of Wiengchan, who was secretly invited to attack P'itsanulok. King Jai Jett'a needed no second invitation. At the end of the year 1566 he advanced to P'itsanulok at the head of a large army and laid siege to the town. The Prince Regent of Siam marched northward with a strong force, supported by a fleet of boats, ostensibly to assist his kinsman, but in reality with the intention of gaining access to the town and delivering it to the King of Wiengchan. The Prince was refused admittance, and before long a Burmese army, sent for by Maha T'ammaraja on the first threat of danger, arrived. The King

of Wiengchan was forced to retire, and the Prince Regent of Siam returned home discomfited, after seeing his fleet of boats destroyed by means of burning rafts which were turned loose in its midst.

In July 1567 King Chakrap'at became a Buddhist priest.

Early in 1568 Maha T'ammaraja demanded the surrender of P'ya Ram, nominally in order to make him Governor of P'ijai. The Prince Regent refused. Maha T'ammaraja insisted. The Prince began to feel that the situation was fast becoming one with which he was incompetent to deal. He therefore begged the old King to resume the reins of office, which the latter did in the month of April 1568.

At about the same time Maha T'ammaraja left P'itsanulok on a visit to Burma, probably to complain to Bhureng Nong of the conduct of Prince Mahin during the invasion of King Jai Jett'a. He now threw himself entirely into the hands of Bhureng Nong, and accepted the position of a vassal Prince, with the title of Chao Fa Song K'we.<sup>1</sup>

King Chakrap'at and Prince Mahin took advantage of Maha T'ammaraja's absence in Burma to carry out a design which they probably thought was a great stroke of policy, but which proved to be not only useless but disastrous. They went to P'itsanulok, removed the King's daughter, Princess Wisut Krasatri (Maha T'ammaraja's wife), together with her children, and took them to Ayut'ia as hostages. Prince Mahin then proceeded to attack Kamp'engp'et. He failed to take it, and returned to Ayut'ia, only to learn that the King of Burma was on the point of avenging Maha T'ammaraja's wrongs by an immediate invasion. Nothing now remained but to

<sup>1</sup> Song K'we was the title of P'itsanulok.

prepare for defence. This King Chakrap'at did to the best of his ability; but the time at his disposal was short and his resources scanty.

In December 1568, a Burmese army,<sup>1</sup> the largest which had yet invaded Siam, arrived at Ayut'ia, having met with practically no opposition on the way.

Maha T'aromaraja, needless to say, accompanied the Burmese army. The Princess Regent of Chiangmai was also compelled to send troops to assist.

In January 1569 King Chakrap'at died. He fell ill almost immediately after the commencement of the siege. His age at the time of his death was sixty-two.

Pinto says of this King: "He was a religious man, who had no knowledge of arms or of war, and withal of a cowardly disposition, a tyrant, and ill-beloved of his subjects." But Pinto, who probably left Siam before King Chakrap'at's accession, can have had no good grounds for so harsh a judgment. The author pictures this King as a weak, good-natured man; generous to his friends; merciful, as shown by his conduct to Prince Sri Sin, a dangerous rival. He seems always to have tried to do his best for his country in very difficult circumstances, and he occupies no unworthy place among the Kings of Siam.

The new King, Mahin, gave up all attempt to conduct the defence of the city, and devoted himself to puerile amusements, leaving everything in the hands of P'ya Ram. He could not have done better, for P'ya Ram, assisted by several other nobles, put up a stubborn defence, and inflicted severe damage on the enemy. The King's young brother, Sri Sawaraja, a mere lad, also greatly distinguished himself, by his bravery and military capacity.

<sup>1</sup> Caesar Frederick, who was in Burma at the time, says that the Burmese army numbered 1,400,000 men. Their losses were 500,000. (Purchas) Ralph Fitch says 300,000 men and 5,000 elephants. The P'ongsawadan says 1,000,000 men.



The King of Burma now determined to get rid of P'ya Ram. He therefore caused Maha T'ammaraaja to write secretly to his wife in Ayut'ia, saying that P'ya Ram alone was the author and instigator of the war: if he were delivered up, terms could easily be arranged. King Mahin, after asking the advice of members of the faction opposed to P'ya Ram, was base enough to deliver up his faithful General to the Burmese. He was punished for his treachery, for Bhureng Nong, with equal baseness, broke his word, and refused to discuss terms, demanding unconditional surrender.

In May King Mahin became jealous of his brave young brother, Prince Sri Sawaraja. He accused the young Prince of taking too much responsibility upon himself, and cruelly ordered him to be executed.

The siege lagged on until August, and in the end the city only fell through treachery. P'ya Chakri, who, as will be remembered, was one of the hostages sent to Burma with Prince Ramesuen after the second Burmese invasion in 1563, had accompanied Bhureng Nong to Ayut'ia. He appeared one day in chains before one of the Siamese forts, pretending that he had escaped from confinement. King Mahin received him well, and placed him in a position of authority. Before long the traitor had posted his creatures at several important points. The vulnerable positions were duly notified to the Burmese. On Sunday, August 30th, 1569, a great attack was made, this time with success. Thus Ayut'ia fell the first time, a victim to the treachery of one of her own sons.<sup>1</sup>

King Mahin, and all the Royal Family, were taken away captive to Burma, together with a vast concourse

<sup>1</sup> Burmese history relates that Bhureng Nong found occasion, not long after the fall of Ayut'ia, to have P'ya Chakri executed; a just fate for so infamous a traitor.

of prisoners and a large number of cannon. After an interval of three months Maha T'ammaraaja was set up as a puppet King.

King Mahin died of fever on the way to Burma. We are told that Bhureng Nong encouraged the doctors who attended the Royal prisoner by threatening them with death if they failed to cure him, and that, when he died, eleven doctors were executed. A severe punishment for failing to save the life of a very worthless man.

## CHAPTER IX

### REIGN OF KING MAHA T'AMMARAJA

BHURENG NOUNG remained at Ayut'ia to witness the coronation of his vassal, Maha T'ammaraja, who was made King with the title of P'ra Sri Sarap'et, but who is better known in history as King Maha T'ammaraja. This monarch was, by virtue of his descent, a suitable occupant of the throne of Siam. His mother was related to the Royal Family of Ayut'ia and his father was a descendant of the Kings of Suk'ot'ai. His elevation to the throne was, however, connected in the minds of his people with the degradation of their country, and during the earlier years of his reign we may suppose that he was an object of hatred and contempt to his subjects.

The King of Burma removed most of the population of Ayut'ia and dismantled the defences of the city. Only ten thousand inhabitants were left behind in the vanquished and now defenceless capital. Many Siamese must have thought that the glory of their country had departed for ever, and that nothing but a miracle could restore their freedom. And truly, as we shall see, the power of recuperation shown by this people was little short of miraculous.

During the next fifteen years Siam was little more than a province of Burma. Burmese officials resided at Ayut'ia and at other important centres, and many Burmese laws and institutions were forced upon the

country. The Burmese era, established by Thinga Raja, a ruler who usurped the throne of Pagan in A. D. 638, was introduced into Siam at this time, to replace the old Mahasakarāt era<sup>1</sup>; this Burmese era became known in Siam by the name of Chulasakarāt<sup>2</sup> or Little Era, and was in use until 1887. It is not yet entirely obsolete.

To the same period probably belongs also the introduction of the Dhammathat, or Code of Manu. This code, which was doubtless well suited to the needs of the Indian Brahminical Society in 600 B.C., was with difficulty grafted onto the laws of Buddhist Siam in the sixteenth century of the Christian era. At the present time the Siamese have freed themselves almost wholly from Manu's paralysing influence; but the more conservative Burmese still retain this hoary and anachronistic piece of legislation.<sup>3</sup>

Siam's troubles with Burma afforded a good opportunity to Cambodia to pay off old scores.<sup>4</sup> In the year following the fall of Ayut'ia, King Boromaraja of Cambodia invaded Siam, thinking doubtless that he could seize the now defenceless capital with great ease, and return home with many prisoners and plenty of booty. He was wrong: a stern resistance was offered, and the Cambodians were forced to retire after suffering heavy losses. This Cambodian invasion, and others which were carried out during the following few years, clearly show the weakness of Siam at that time. Cambodia had not been a formidable antagonist since the foundation of

<sup>1</sup> The Mahasakarāt Era was introduced in southern India by King Kanishka, in A.D. 78. It was probably introduced into Siam and Cambodia by King Kanishka's missionaries. (See chapter ii.)

<sup>2</sup> The Siamese legend that the Chulasakarāt Era was introduced by King Ramk'ambheng of Suk'ot'ai is unworthy of serious consideration. All the carved inscriptions of King Ramk'ambheng and his successors use only the Mahasakarāt.

<sup>3</sup> The Dhammathat was introduced into Burma in the reign of Wareru of Pegu (1287-96). The version now in use was drawn up in the reign of T'ade T'amaraja (Thalun): (1629-48).

<sup>4</sup> One is reminded of the "weasel Scot," as pictured by Shakespeare (*Henry V.*, act i., scene 2).

Ayut'ia, having, in fact, usually occupied the position of a vassal State.

The Cambodian invasion proved to be a blessing in disguise, for it afforded an excuse to King Maha T'amaraja to strengthen the defences of Ayut'ia without exciting the distrust of the King of Burma. This opportunity was eagerly grasped, for King Maha T'amaraja was not the man to resign himself to a permanent state of subjection. New walls were built, canals were dug, and cannon were purchased from the Portuguese and other foreigners.

We must now introduce the most celebrated hero and warrior who ever played a part upon the stage of Siamese history, namely Naresuen the Great.

This Prince was the elder son of King Maha T'amaraja. He was born in 1555. After the invasion of Siam by Bhureng Nong in 1564, Prince Naresuen was taken to Burma as a hostage for the fidelity of his father—a precaution which seems to have had the desired result. On becoming King of Siam, King Maha T'amaraja gave one of his daughters in marriage to Bhureng Nong, and at the same time begged that Prince Naresuen might be allowed to return to Siam. The request was granted, and the young Prince, then aged sixteen, returned home in 1571. He was appointed Maha Uparat, and was sent up as Governor of P'itsanulok, in accordance with ancient custom.

Prince Naresuen was popularly known as the Black Prince, his younger brother, Prince Ekot'sarot, born about 1558, being known as the White Prince. As will be seen, Siam's Black Prince was no unworthy namesake of our English Black Prince.

In 1574 the King of Burma undertook an invasion of Wiengchan, and compelled the King of Siam and Prince

Naresuen to accompany him, Prince Ekot'otsarot being left behind as Regent at Ayut'ia. Prince Naresuen fell ill with smallpox on the way. The Burmese therefore proceeded to Wiengchan without their Siamese auxiliaries.<sup>1</sup>

In 1575 and 1578 Siam was disturbed by further Cambodian invasions.<sup>2</sup> The Cambodians were repulsed on both occasions, but they succeeded in capturing a large number of prisoners. Siam, in her depopulated condition, could ill afford this constant drain upon her manhood. During these Cambodian raids the young Black Prince had several opportunities of displaying his military capacity and his personal courage.

After the Cambodian invasion of 1578 P'ya Chin Chantu, a Cambodian nobleman who had been visiting Ayut'ia, ostensibly as a political refugee, but in reality as a spy, escaped away. The Black Prince and his young brother pursued the fugitive. An action ensued, in which Prince Naresuen astonished all beholders by his reckless disregard of danger. From that time onwards he began to be looked upon, both in Siam and in Burma, as the one man likely to undertake the difficult task of freeing his country from Burmese dominion.

In 1578 Princess Maha T'ewi, the Regent of Chiangmai, died. Bhureng Nong thereupon set up one of his own

<sup>1</sup> This was the second Burmese invasion of Wiengchan - Luang P'rabang territory since the fall of Ayut'ia. The first was in 1569-70. King Jai Jett'a, as usual, fled to the jungle with the greater part of the population of Wiengchan, and the Burmese retired, after suffering great hardships from famine and disease. In 1571 King Jai Jett'a, while engaged in a war in Cambodia, lost himself in the jungle, and was never seen again—a judgment on him, perhaps, for stealing all the best images of Buddha from Chiangmai. After some disturbances, an infant son of Jai Jett'a was set up as King, with one P'ya Si Sura K'wang Fa as Regent. The King of Burma insisted on the abdication of the Regent in favour of a brother of King Jai Jett'a, who had been a prisoner in Burma since the invasion of 1565. The Regent ignored this demand. Hence the invasion of 1574, which resulted in the capture of Prince Noh Keo and the elevation of the brother of King Jai Jett'a to the throne of Wiengchan as a vassal of Burma. This marks the extreme limit attained by Bhureng Nong's empire. Wiengchan threw off the Burmese yoke in 1595.

<sup>2</sup> King Boromaraja of Cambodia died in 1576, and was succeeded by his son who assumed the title of P'ya Satt'a.

sons, Tharawadi Min, as vassal Prince of Chiengmai. He was given the title of Nohrata Zaw.

In 1580 King Maha T'ammaraaja began to make further improvements in the fortifications of Ayut'ia, doubtless giving the Cambodian menace as an excuse. In the same year a serious rebellion broke out in eastern Siam. The rebel leader, Yan Prajien, defeated and killed the General who was sent against him, and the King's troops went over to the rebels. Yan Prajien then attacked Lopburi, but was killed in action, whereupon the rebels were dispersed.

Later in that same year the King of Cambodia attacked and captured P'etchaburi, removing most of the population as prisoners, and in 1582 yet another Cambodian incursion was made into eastern Siam.

Siamese history concerns itself but little with the condition of the common people. We can, however, easily guess that at this period they had reached the lowest possible degree of misery and want. Numberless men had been killed in the wars with Burma, and thousands more had been swept away into slavery in Burma and Cambodia. The few who remained were barely able, we may suppose, to plant the rice crop from year to year; yet all had to work like slaves in order to raise the tribute payable to the King of Burma.

But the day of deliverance was at hand. In the month of December 1581 King Bhureng Nong of Burma died. He was sixty-six years of age, and had reigned for thirty-one years. The Burmese Empire, whose heterogeneous elements had only been held together by the strong personality of Bhureng Nong, was inherited by his son, Nanda Bhureng, a man who possessed all his father's ruthlessness and cruelty, but none of his will-power or military capacity.

One of Nanda Bhureng's first acts after ascending the throne was to call upon all the vassal Kings and Princes of Burma to attend in person to do him homage. The King of Siam was unable to attend, and was represented on this occasion by Prince Naresuen.

While the Siamese Prince was in Burma, a rebellion broke out at Muang Kum, in the Shan States. The King of Burma sent up Prince Naresuen with a Siamese force, accompanied by two Burmese Princes, to subdue the rebellious city. The Black Prince of Siam succeeded in capturing the city after both the Burmese Princes had failed ignominiously to do so. This success did not enhance the Black Prince's popularity at the Burmese Court. Relations between him and the Crown Prince of Burma became strained, and he returned to Siam at the end of 1582.<sup>1</sup> This visit served to show him the internal weakness of the Burmese Empire, and he went home fully determined to strike a blow for the freedom of Siam as soon as a favourable occasion should arise.

During the year 1583 Burma made preparations for war. The road across the frontier to Kamp'engp'et was improved, and large supplies for an invading army were collected at Kamp'engp'et, which was at that time included in the dominions of the Burmese Prince of Chiangmai.

In 1584 trouble arose between Nanda Bhureng and his brother-in-law, the Prince of Ava. A daughter of the latter was married to the Burmese Crown Prince. She complained to her father that she was being maltreated. He determined to rebel, and wrote to some of the other subject Princes of Burma asking them to join him. The design was revealed to Nanda Bhureng, who

<sup>1</sup> According to some accounts he escaped, and was pursued to the frontier.



at once proceeded to attack Ava, leaving the Crown Prince as Regent at Hanthawadi.

Prince Naresuen was ordered to assist in this expedition, and Nanda Bhureng thought the occasion favourable for getting rid of a man who showed signs of becoming a dangerous enemy. He therefore instructed two Peguan nobles to meet the Siamese Prince on the frontier and accompany him into Burma. While on the march, they were to find an opportunity to murder him.

Prince Naresuen met these two nobles at Müang K'reng. After meeting him, the intended assassins were touched by his youth and his gallant bearing; their consciences revolted against their infamous task, and they divulged the plot to the Prince.

Prince Naresuen then called a meeting of all his Generals, together with the principal Peguan officials in the district, and openly declared to them that he renounced, on behalf of his father, Siam's allegiance to Burma. This important declaration was made at Müang K'reng in the month of May 1584.

Most of the population along the border joined Prince Naresuen, and he proceeded to Hanthawadi at the head of a considerable force, and laid siege to the city. He shortly afterwards learned, however, that Nanda Bhureng had defeated the Prince of Ava, and was returning to Hanthawadi. Not being, as yet, in a condition to encounter a victorious army, instead of, as he had hoped, a routed one, he returned to Siam, taking with him a large number of prisoners. The majority of these were Siamese who had been captured by the Burmese in previous wars, and forced to settle in Pegu.

The King of Burma, incensed at these proceedings, at once despatched a force, commanded by the Crown Prince, to pursue the Siamese. Prince Naresuen utterly

defeated them on the banks of the Sittaung River.' One of the Burmese Generals, Surakamma, was shot dead by the Siamese Prince. This was the first victory gained by the Siamese against the Burmese for many years.

This success was soon followed by another. Nanda Bhureng demanded the surrender of a number of Shan prisoners who had fled from Burma to P'itsanulok. The Black Prince haughtily declined to accede to this demand, and in his reply openly asserted the independence of Siam. A Burmese army advanced to Kamp'engp'et for the purpose of compelling the surrender of the Shans. An army from northern Siam was sent to Kamp'engp'et, and the Burmese were driven back across the frontier.

The Governors of Sawank'alok and P'ijai, fearing the vengeance of the King of Burma, declined to assist in this operation, thinking it safer to rebel against their own King. They fortified themselves in Sawank'alok, but the city was stormed by the Black Prince, and the two rebel leaders were captured and executed.

About this time, King Satt'a of Cambodia decided that he would do well to throw in his lot with Siam; he accordingly sent envoys to Ayut'ia, who succeeded in concluding a treaty between the two Kingdoms.

Nanda Bhureng now made preparations for a serious invasion of Siam, and the Siamese, fully aware of his intention, laid plans for resisting him. Three armies were raised, one under P'ya Chakri, one under the Governor of Suk'ot'ai, and one under the two Siamese Princes. It is unlikely that the total forces available exceeded 50,000 men, and this number was only attained

<sup>1</sup> Burmese history states that the Crown Prince followed the Siamese as far as Ayut'ia, where he was defeated. The Siamese account appears more probable. The musket used by Prince Naresuen in this action formed for many years part of the regalia of Siam and was known as the "Musket of the Battle of the Sittaung River."

by removing almost the whole population of the northern provinces to Ayut'ia, by which means the entire strength of the Kingdom was concentrated in the district immediately surrounding the capital. The vice crop on the enemy's probable line of march was either gathered in or destroyed, and other supplies were removed.

In December 1584 a Burmese army of 30,000 men advanced into Siam by the Three Pagodas route. They were led by the Prince of Bassein, an uncle of the King of Burma. The plan of campaign was to advance to Ayut'ia, where they were to be joined by another army of 100,000 men, under the Burmese Prince of Chiengmai. The plan miscarried. The army of the Prince of Bassein arrived at Sup'an long before the Chiengmai force was anywhere near, and after several engagements was driven back across the frontier with great loss.

The Prince of Chiengmai did not arrive in Siam until February 1585, about a fortnight after the final defeat of the army of the Prince of Bassein. He encamped at Jainat, and after he had lost a great many men through constant guerilla attacks by the Siamese, he retired to Kamp'engp'et, without having attempted any serious engagement.

Nanda Bhureng threw the whole blame for the failure of this expedition onto Tharawadi Min, who had been so dilatory in his march from Chiengmai. He ordered him to advance once more to Nak'onsawan, in order to carry out preparations for a further great invasion of Siam during the next cold season. These preparations were to consist in destroying the crops and in hindering the populations near Ayut'ia from cultivating their fields. While thus destroying the Siamese supplies, the Burmese commissariat was to be assured by planting rice in the depopulated provinces of northern Siam. The Crown

Prince of Burma, with 50,000 men, was stationed at Kamp'engp'et in order to assist in these preparations.

The Prince of Chiengmai established his camp at the village of Sraket, near Ang'tong.

Prince Naresuen was not the man to allow the Burmese to carry out their preparations under his very nose. The Prince of Chiengmai was attacked and defeated several times. Finally, in April 1586, his army was drawn into an ambush by means of a pretended retreat by an attacking Siamese force, and he was routed, losing 10,000 men, 120 elephants and 400 boats. Tharawadi Min himself only narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the Black Prince. He fled in the nick of time, leaving all his personal property to be captured by the Siamese.<sup>1</sup>

This was a most important victory. In particular, several thousands of Lao prisoners, who could be used to till the *pau* fields, were of incalculable value to Siam at that time.

Siam now found herself in a better position to resist a Burmese invasion that had been the case since the days of King Chakrap'at.

The King of Cambodia had sent an army, under the command of his brother, Prince Srisup'anma, to assist in the attack on the Prince of Chiengmai. This was the first time that Siam and Cambodia had ever acted together, and the result was unfortunate. The Black Prince considered that Prince Srisup'anma treated him with discourtesy during the return journey to Ayut'ia, and retaliated by causing the severed heads of some of the Lao prisoners to be impaled close to the boat of the Cambodian Prince. The latter complained to his brother,

<sup>1</sup> Burmese history makes no mention of this defeat, but we read in the *Annals of Chiengmai* as follows: "In the year 947 (1585-6) the King of Burma ordered Chiengmai to attack Ayut'ia. When the Chiengmai army got near Ayut'ia, the Siamese defeated and scattered them. Many men, elephants, horses and arms were lost. The army retreated to Chiengmai."

on his return to Cambodia, of the treatment which he had received. King Satt'a was greatly offended, and determined to abandon the alliance with Siam as soon as a good opportunity should arise.

Although the preliminary operations planned by King Narai Bhurong in preparation for a fresh invasion of Siam had so grievously miscarried, the invasion was duly undertaken in November 1586. The Burmese force which consisted of 250,000 men, and should have been able, given good generalship, utterly to crush any opposition which Siam could offer. This great army was divided into three portions, one under the King of Burma himself, one under the Crown Prince, and the third under the Prince of Taungu.<sup>1</sup>

The Siamese had had plenty of time to prepare for resistance. The whole available population was gathered together at Ayut'ia and all the crops, ripe and unripe, were either harvested or destroyed. Small bands of men, under leaders experienced in guerilla tactics, were collected for the purpose of harassing the Burmese whenever a chance offered. No attempt was made to hold the surrounding country, except to the south, where it was, of course, of paramount importance to maintain communication with the sea.

The three Burmese armies advanced to Ayut'ia from the north, the west and the east, arriving simultaneously early in January 1587. The siege lasted until May, and was notable on account of the resource and courage shown by Prince Naresuen and his young brother. The latter narrowly escaped death by a Burmese bullet, and the former continually carried out raids on the Burmese camps, often being seen on foot, leading his men where the

<sup>1</sup> Brother of Bhurong Nong. The Prince of Chiangmai was held to have proved himself an incompetent General, so was placed in charge of the Commissariat Department. From the result, it would appear that he was a cess of it.

fighting was hottest, and always oblivious to danger or fatigue. It is impossible to doubt that it was the example thus set by Prince Naresuen, and nothing else, which inspired the Siamese to offer so stern a resistance against what must have seemed overwhelming odds. In the end, the King of Burma, disheartened by the heavy losses sustained by his armies, confronted by the spectres of famine and disease, and fearing worse troubles when the rainy season started, retired to Burma.'

From this time onwards the independence of Siam seemed assured.

The outcome of this siege was very unfortunate for King Satt'a of Cambodia. Determined to avenge his brother's real or imaginary wrongs, he invaded Siam early in 1587, and captured Prachin. Prince Naresuen retaliated, as soon as the Burmese peril had been adverted, by driving the Cambodians from Prachin and pursuing them into their own country. Battambang and Pursat were captured, and the Siamese advanced to Lowek, at that time the capital of Cambodia. Owing to lack of supplies, the Siamese were forced to withdraw, but the Black Prince from that time onward determined to be revenged on King Satt'a. Being himself a man of his word, the conduct of the Cambodian monarch in treating the Treaty of 1585 as a "scrap of paper" appeared to him as a piece of perfidy deserving of condign punishment.

In July 1590 King Maha T'ammaraaja died. He was aged seventy-five, and had reigned for twenty-one years. In his youth active and patriotic, he became in middle age a traitor to his country, and ascended the throne when Siam had sunk into a state of degradation for which he

<sup>1</sup> Siamese histories state that Nanda Bhurung besieged Ayut'thia twice, once early in 1587 and again at the beginning of 1588, but give no details about the second siege. Burmese history does not mention the second siege. The author has concluded that only one siege took place.

was himself largely responsible. As King, he appears to have been a nonentity, wisely leaving the conduct of affairs to his sons. He lived long enough to see Siam once more free; but he must often have reflected with sorrow that it was his sons, and not himself, who severed the chains which he had helped to forge.

## CHAPTER X

### REIGN OF KING NARESUEŃ THE GREAT

PRINCE NARESUEŃ became King at the age of thirty-five. His first act was to appoint his brother, Prince Ekhat'otsarot, to be Maha Uparat.\* He did not, however, send the Uparat to govern P'itsanulok, as had been usual in previous reigns, but retained him at Ayut'ia. There were two reasons for this; firstly, the great affection which existed between the two brothers; and secondly, the depopulated condition of the northern provinces at that time. Prince Ekhat'otsarot was accorded honours higher than those paid to any previous Uparat. His brother desired him to be considered as joint King, rather than as Crown Prince, and to possess the same rank and authority as himself.

The new King had not been long on the throne before he was called upon to repel another Burmese invasion. The necessity for making a serious effort to subjugate Siam was impressed upon the King of Burma by all his advisers, who rightly held that the continual rebellions which were taking place in the Shan States were a result of the example set by Siam in throwing off the Burmese yoke.

In November 1590 a Burmese army of 200,000 men, under the leadership of the Crown Prince, proceeded to invade Siam. The route followed was past the Three

\* See p. 52.



Pagodas and Kamhuri, and it was hoped to reach Ayut'ia before the Siamese could organise any opposition. King Naresuen, however, was ready for them. He met the advance guard of the Burmese, under the Princes of Pagan and Bassein, not far from the frontier. The Burmese were defeated, the Prince of Pagan being killed and the Prince of Bassein captured. The Siamese pursued the Burmese until they came up to the main army of the Crown Prince. Confusion and panic ensued, and the Burmese were driven back across the frontier. The Crown Prince himself only narrowly escaped being taken prisoner.

These repeated failures filled Nanda Bhurong with apprehension. He foresaw the break-up of his Empire and felt that his dynasty was endangered by the fact that the Crown Prince was personally involved in these disastrous defeats.

It was decided to make a final effort to subdue Siam. An army of 250,000 men was raised, which crossed the frontier in December 1592. The Crown Prince was nominally in command, but the real leaders were the Prince of Prome, who had met with some success in the Shan States, Natchin Nong,<sup>1</sup> son of the Prince of Taungu, and the Prince of Zaparo.<sup>2</sup> The Crown Prince advanced by way of the Three Pagodas, and the other commanders by the Melamao route. The Burmese Prince of Chiangmai was also ordered to send his troops to assist.

The King of Siam hardly expected the Burmese to be ready for another invasion so soon after the serious reverse which they had suffered in 1590. At the end of

<sup>1</sup> This was one of the Burmese Princes who accompanied Prince Naresuen to Müang Kum in 1582.

<sup>2</sup> A District of Burma, which the author has failed to identify.

the year 1592 he was making ready to invade Cambodia, in order to inflict what he regarded as necessary punishment upon the treacherous King Satt'a. He had, therefore, a large number of men under arms, and had no great cause for dismay when he heard that two Burmese armies were on the point of invading his dominions. He determined immediately to attack whichever army arrived first.

The Crown Prince of Burma, as it happened, was the first to arrive. He advanced to the village of Trap'angkru, north-east of Sup'an. King Naresuen, accompanied by his brother, took up a position at Nong Sa P-i, about thirty miles to the east of the Burmese army. The Siamese forces were greatly inferior to the Burmese in numbers, and the King therefore decided to await an attack at Nong Sa Bai, where he held a strong position.

When the Burmans were reported to be advancing, one P'ya Sri Sai Narong was sent forward with a small force to reconnoitre, with orders not to allow himself to be engaged in action. The next morning, when the King and Prince were arming themselves for the expected conflict, shots were heard, and it was found that P'ya Sri Sai Narong, contrary to orders, had attacked the Burmese. The King sent a message to the P'ya to the effect that he need expect no reinforcements, but must get back as best he could. On receiving this message, P'ya Sri Sai Narong and his whole force turned and fled helter-skelter. The Burmese pursued them, probably thinking that the whole Siamese army was about to flee. It thus came about that the tactics adopted by King Naresuen on a former occasion, namely to draw on the enemy by a feigned retreat, were on this occasion followed again, but unintentionally. In a short time the

Siamese, who were fully prepared, found the whole army of the Burmese Crown Prince advancing against them hastily and in utter disorder.

King Naresuen and his brother were both mounted on elephants which happened to be *musth* at the time. The noise and excitement of the Burmese onrush so maddened these two animals that they flung themselves furiously forward through the front ranks of the Burmese army; almost before they knew what had happened, the King and the Prince found themselves, accompanied only by their immediate attendants, in the midst of the Burmese host. As soon as the elephants could be stopped, and the dust had subsided, the King saw, to his surprise, the Crown Prince of Burma (whom he had known well in former days) close by him, also mounted on an elephant. He at once called out: "Brother Prince, leave the shelter of that tree. Come out and fight with me, for the honour of our names and the wonder of future ages!"

The Burmese Prince had but to say a word and the Siamese monarch and his brother would have been overwhelmed and either killed or captured. Though a poor General, he was, however, a brave man. Scorning to refuse such a challenge, he drove his elephant forward, and the two Princes joined in single combat. The Prince dealt a fierce blow with his sword at the King's head. The latter bent in time to avoid the blow, but the leather cap which he was wearing was cut through. The elephants broke away, but were brought forward for a second charge. This time the Burmese Prince received a wound in the shoulder and fell dead from his elephant.

Thus perished the unfortunate Prince Min Chit Swa. He was forced by his father to undertake a task for which he had no capacity. He was, we learn, most unwilling

to command this last expedition. It can at least be said of him that he died bravely, fighting against the most redoubtable warrior ever produced in Siam.'

Prince Ekat'otsarot, in the meantime, had engaged in single combat with the Prince of Zaparo, whom he overcame and slew.

When the Burmese realised that their Princes were dead, they fiercely attacked the Siamese Princes and their few followers. The King was wounded in the hand, and the two mahouts of the elephants of the King and Prince were both killed. By this time, however, a large body of Siamese troops had managed to force their way through the Burmese ranks, and the King and Prince were rescued.

The Burmese army was thrown into a state of utter confusion and demoralisation by the death of the Crown Prince, and immediately began to retire towards the frontier. The Siamese did not pursue the enemy, firstly because the second Burmese army had arrived at Melamao and might have attacked them in the rear, and secondly because the Siamese themselves had been thrown into some confusion by the unforeseen turn of events.

The King of Burma, on hearing of his son's death, decided to abandon the expedition. The Melamao army was recalled.

Thus was a serious invasion repelled, with very small losses on both sides, through the personal valour of King Naresuen and his brother. It was many years before

<sup>1</sup> Burmese history gives a different version of these events. In particular, the Crown Prince's death is said to have been due to an accident. The romantic account given in Siamese history is, however, well authenticated. It is supported by the history of Pegu and by van Vliet (*Beschrijving van het Koninkrijk Siam*, Leyden, 1692).

The sword and leather cap worn by King Naresuen on this occasion became part of the regalia of Siam, and were used by all the Kings until the fall of Ayut'ia in 1767

the Burmese again invaded Siam. The King caused a pagoda to be erected on the spot where he overcame the Prince of Burma. This pagoda may be seen there to the present day.

The King, on returning to Ayut'ia, held an enquiry into the conduct of some of his Generals, whom he accused of gross negligence and dilatoriness, in that they had not followed him through the Burmese ranks. He proposed to punish the principal offenders by death. A deputation of the clergy pleaded for their pardon, which the King granted on one condition, namely that they must capture Tavoy and Tenasserim from the Burmese.

Tenasserim and Tavoy had formed a part of the Siamese dominions from the days of King Ramk'amheng of Suk'ot'ai till they were taken by the Burmese in 1568, at the time of the fall of Ayut'ia. Tavoy, which contained a population for the most part of non-Tai race, had been treated by the Siamese as a dependency or vassal State, under a native Prince. Tenasserim, with its port, Mergui, had always been an integral part of the Siamese dominions.

Early in 1593 two Siamese armies, each numbering 50,000 men, commanded by two of the erring Generals, Chao P'ya Chakri and P'ya P'rak'lang, left Ayut'ia for the south. Chao P'ya Chakri advanced to Tenasserim, which fell after a siege of only fifteen days. P'ya P'rak'lang met with rather more opposition, but after one sharp encounter with the Burmese and a siege of twenty days, he found himself master of Tavoy.

Chao P'ya Chakri, not knowing that Tavoy had fallen, commandeered all the ships at Tenasserim, numbering about a hundred and fifty, and hastily fitted them out as a fleet to assist the army of P'ya Prak'lang. At the

same time, he himself marched north at the head of an army of 30,000 men.

P'ya P'rak'lang, being in equal ignorance as to the result of the attack on Tenasserim, raised at Tavoy a fleet of about a hundred ships, which he sent to assist his colleague in the south.

Chao P'ya Chakri's fleet fell in with and engaged a Burmese fleet of two hundred ships, which was transporting an army to Tenasserim. While this naval battle was in progress, P'ya P'rak'lang's fleet appeared on the scene. The Burmese were completely overpowered, several ships and more than five hundred men were captured, and the rest escaped as best they could back to the Irawadi.

The Siamese learned from their naval prisoners that a strong Burmese force was advancing against Tavoy. All the available men were therefore at once landed. Chao P'ya Chakri had by this time arrived at Tavoy, and a combined force of about 90,000 men was thus available, only some 10,000 having been left behind at Tenasserim. With this strong force, the Siamese waited for the Burmese a little north of Tavoy, and completely routed them.

Chao P'ya Chakri and P'ya P'rak'lang, together with the other Generals serving under them, were held by the King to have purged their offences committed during the last Burmese invasion. Their expedition had, indeed, been very successful. Tavoy and Tenasserim remained in the hands of the Siamese. These two towns were most important centres of foreign trade, which by this time had reached considerable proportions. It was very necessary for Siam, in those days of slow communications, to hold seaports on the Indian Ocean. Apart from their value as doors of ingress into Siam, these

provinces, at that time, carried on an extensive export trade in elephants, sappan-wood, and spices of all kinds.

King Naresuen now felt that his realm was free from any immediate danger of being overrun by the Burmese. He therefore began to repopulate the northern provinces, the inhabitants of which had, for the most part, been removed to Ayut'ia eight years previously. By the end of the year 1593 we thus see Siam, owing to King Naresuen's energy and genius, practically restored to the territorial condition in which she had been when King Chakrap'at mounted the throne in 1549. The population, however, had been greatly reduced. Some authorities think that Siam has hardly yet regained the population which she possessed before her conflicts with Burma began in the sixteenth century.

Chinese history relates a remarkable fact, not mentioned in any Siamese documents, which clearly shows that at this time the Burmese danger was not thought to be very imminent. In the twentieth year of the reign of the Emperor Wanleh (thirteenth of the Ming dynasty) war broke out between China and Japan (1592). The King of Siam wrote offering to furnish an army to assist the Chinese. The offer was refused owing to objections raised by the Viceroy of Kwangtung and Kwangsi. It is difficult to imagine what possible reason King Naresuen can have had for wishing to engage in a war against Japan.

As we have seen, the Burmese invasion of 1592 found the King of Siam on the point of leading an expedition against Cambodia. This postponed invasion was duly carried out in May 1593.

According to the *P'ongsawadan* armies numbering over 100,000 men were employed on this expedition,

as well as a large fleet of boats. Cambodian history gives the numbers of the invading army as 50,000.

Battambang fell without offering any real resistance. Pursat, under the command of P'ya Sawank'alok,<sup>1</sup> held out longer, but was overwhelmed by the superior force of the Siamese. At Boribun, Prince Srisup'anma, the brother of the King of Cambodia, was stationed with an army of 30,000 men. The Prince fled to Lowek as soon as he felt that the situation was becoming critical. Boribun fell, and the victorious King of Siam advanced to the capital. Here he was joined by two other armies, which had advanced by northerly routes, and whose commanders were able to report that Siemrap, Bassac, and all the other important cities in the north of Cambodia had been captured.

King Satt'a of Cambodia was summoned to surrender and swear fealty to Siam. He replied by casting the envoy into prison, and opening a sharp fire against the Siamese. A determined resistance was made by the Cambodians, and it was not until the month of July 1594 that Lowek was taken by assault. Both sides suffered heavy losses.

King Satt'a, with his two sons and his female relations, fled to northern Cambodia. The following year they retired into the territory of the King of Luang P'rabang, where King Satt'a died, an exile, in 1596. His eldest son did not long survive him.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Probably a son of the Cambodian Prince who was adopted by King P'rajai, and who took part in the conspiracy against the usurper K'un Worawongsa in 1548. The Governor of the Province of Pursat still bears the same title.

<sup>2</sup> Post-Bangkok versions of Siamese history narrate that King Satt'a was captured and beheaded, and that King Naresuen washed his feet in the blood of the Cambodian monarch. The author believes this story to be a myth, for the following reasons:

(a) The history of Luang Prasacet, written in 1088—less than a hundred years after the events in question—mentions the capture of Prince Srisup'anma, but says nothing about King Satt'a. If both King and Prince were captured, it would be absurd to mention only the Prince.



Prince Srisup'anma and his family were captured and taken back to Ayut'ia. A Siamese garrison was left at Lowek, and Cambodia was for a time placed under a Siamese Military Governor.

A very large number of prisoners were brought back from Cambodia; many thousands of Siamese, captured by King Satt'a on his various marauding expeditions, were also set free. This supply of man-power was very welcome to the King of Siam, who was, as we have seen, at that time trying to repopulate his northern provinces.'

In the same year (1594) the war with Burma was renewed. The brain of Nanda Bhureng, whose mental powers had never been of a high order, had been altogether dislocated by his repeated disasters, culminating in the death of the Crown Prince. He suspected all those around him of disloyalty, and estranged his subjects, both Burmese and members of other races, by committing all kinds of atrocities.

The Peguans had never been at all devoted to Burma. The successes of King Naresuen encouraged them to hope for independence. Their efforts towards freedom led to massacres. The massacres drove numbers of people away to take refuge in Siam. The refugees

(b) The history of Cambodia has a fairly full account of these events. The capture of Prince Srisup'anma is mentioned, but it is stated that King Satt'a and his sons escaped, and their subsequent adventures are described.

(c) Antonio de Morga (*Hakluyt Soc.*, vol. xxxix.) gives a very full account of events in Cambodia at this period, compiled from the narratives of Spanish eye-witnesses, who themselves took an active part in the events narrated. Morga's account agrees in almost every detail with Cambodian history. In particular, he states that King Satt'a (called by him Prauncar Langara) together with his eldest son, died at Luang Prabang in 1596.

King Naresuen's fame gains in lustre by absolving him from the false charge of having washed his feet in the blood of his fallen foe.

/ Morga relates that many Portuguese and Castilians were among the prisoners taken. They proved troublesome. One of them, a Dominican monk named Fray Maldonado, stirred up some sort of disturbance at Ayut'ia. Many of his accomplices were burnt alive. He himself, with other Spaniards and Portuguese, escaped by boat. They were pursued by a force of forty armed boats. A fight took place, which lasted for a week. The fugitives got away after heavy losses on both sides.

intrigued with their friends at home. The Peguan Governor of Moulmein finally raised the standard of rebellion. The Burmese Governor of Martaban prepared to subdue him by force. He appealed to Siam for aid. King Naresuen was only too pleased to assist him, and despatched an army of 30,000 men, which speedily captured Martaban. The Prince of Tanngu<sup>1</sup> was ordered to drive out the intruders. He attempted to do so, but his army was driven back by the Siamese and Peguans as far north as Thaton. It was not thought safe, however, for the comparatively small Siamese force to pursue the Burmese too far. They therefore retreated.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of this expedition, a large part of Pegu remained under the suzerainty of Siam, whereby Burma was greatly weakened and Siam proportionately strengthened. It must not be forgotten, however, that Pegu was by this time, owing to continual wars, a very different country from what it had been in the reigns of Tabeng Shwe Ti and Bhureng Nong.

During the next ten years we see Burma, far from invading and devastating Siam, as she had done continuously since the year 1549, herself a prey to internal commotions, and ill able to act the part of an aggressor. Siam, on the other hand, was troubled with no internal broils. Her King was therefore able, for the first time in his reign, to pay serious attention to his home affairs. At this time, also, he began to cultivate the friendship of the Spaniards and Portuguese, who had settled in Siam in considerable numbers. In 1598 one Don Tello

<sup>1</sup> This Prince was a cousin of Nanda Bhureng. He had recently succeeded his father, Min Khaung, brother of Bhureng Nong.

<sup>2</sup> Burmese history asserts that the Siamese were defeated by the Prince of Tanngu on this occasion. The reader may take his choice. The results of the expedition appear to have been favourable to Siam.

de Aguirre was sent from Manila to Siam on a diplomatic mission. He succeeded in concluding a Treaty of Amity and Commerce between Spain and Siam. This was the second Treaty between Siam and a European power. As we have seen, the first, with Portugal, was concluded in the reign of King Rama T'ibodi II.

In the year 1599 King Naresuen again invaded Burma. In order to understand the circumstances which brought about this invasion, we must briefly survey the tangled politics of Burma. In 1593 Nanda Bhureng appointed his son, the Prince of Ava, to be Crown Prince in the place of Min Chit Swa, slain by King Naresuen, and sent his half-brother, Nyaung Yan Min, to be Prince of Ava. This arrangement offended the Prince of Prome, who had hoped to become Crown Prince. Believing that his cousin, the Prince of Taungu, was responsible for the slight put upon him, the Prince of Prome invaded Taungu. He was repulsed, but on returning home rebelled, and declared Prome an independent State. In this emergency, the Prince of Ava did nothing to assist Nanda Bhureng. As for the Prince of Chiangmai, he also was in a state of rebellion, having declined to send one of his sons to Burma, nominally to be educated, but in reality to be held as a hostage for his fidelity.

In 1596 The King of Arakan equipped a fleet and seized the port of Syriam and other coast towns in Burma. He then entered into negotiations with the Prince of Taungu, which resulted in these two potentates agreeing to divide Burma between themselves, and to invoke the aid of Siam to accomplish their purpose. With this end in view, they despatched envoys to King

<sup>1</sup> Manila was founded in 1571. The Spaniards first gained a foothold in the Philippines in 1565.

Naresuen offering him their assistance if he would undertake another invasion of Burma.

In the year 1594, Prince Noh Keo, son of the former King Jai Jett'a of Luang P'rabang, had been sent back, after having been a State prisoner in Burma for about twenty years, to occupy the throne of Luang P'rabang. He at once took steps to make himself independent of Burma. In 1595 he quarrelled with Tharawadi Min of Chiengmai and incited the Chief of Nan to rebel. Three years later he declared war on Chiengmai and captured Chiengsen. The unfortunate Tharawadi Min was in a position of great danger. He was a foreigner, placed by force on the throne of Chiengmai, and could not look for much loyalty or support from his own subjects. They were far more likely to assist the King of Luang P'rabang, who had a strong hereditary claim to be their ruler. Burma was in no position to help him. In despair he appealed to Siam, offering to place his realm under Siamese suzerainty. King Naresuen accepted the offer, sent up an army to Chiengsen, drove out the invaders, and installed a Lao nobleman named P'ya Ram Dejo to reside at Chiengsen as a sort of Siamese Commissioner.

In the light of subsequent events, it appears that this was a mistaken policy. King Naresuen could have easily annexed the whole of the Chiengmai dominions to Siam. Had he done so, the dawn of the seventeenth century would have seen him ruling over a strong and united Tai Empire. He missed a great opportunity, and as a result the northern and southern Tai drifted apart, and were never truly united together until about three hundred years later.

In 1599 King Naresuen once more invaded Burma, intending this time to reduce that Kingdom to a state

of impotence. Unfortunately he made the mistake of trusting the rulers of Arakan and Taungu, who had promised him their help. Himself incapable of deceit or double dealing, he was never inclined to distrust others. By this time, the Prince of Taungu had decided that there was more to gain by acting without other support than that of the King of Arakan, and determined, if possible, to prevent a Siamese invasion of Burma. He therefore tried, during the whole of the year 1598, to foment, by means of secret agents, trouble in Martaban and other parts of Pegu then subject to Siam. So successful was he that King Naresuen, who crossed into Pegu in the middle of 1599, found his newly won Peguan provinces in a state of revolt. While he was engaged in restoring order, an Arakanese army advanced to Hanthawadi, and the Prince of Taungu shortly afterwards led his forces to join the Arakanese before the walls of the capital.

The wily Prince of Taungu represented himself to Nanda Bhureng as an ally. King Naresuen fondly imagined that he was supporting the interests of Siam. In reality he was acting in collusion with the King of Arakan, and had no other object than to gain for himself the supreme power in Burma. After long negotiations, the Crown Prince of Burma left Hanthawadi and joined the Prince of Taungu. He was promptly murdered. His death was concealed from his father, who shortly afterwards, despairing of being able to resist the Arakanese, and appalled at the imminent prospect of a Siamese invasion, flung himself into the arms of the Prince of Taungu. The unfortunate Nanda Bhureng was removed to Taungu, and his capital, Hanthawadi, was given over to the Arakanese, who looted it for several days, and finally burnt it to ashes.

King Naresuen arrived at Hanthawadi in October 1599 only to find that he had been hoodwinked. Nanda Bhureng was gone, practically a prisoner, to Taungu, and Hanthawadi was a smouldering heap of ruins.

Remonstrances addressed to the Prince of Taungu only called forth evasive answers. King Naresuen, therefore, carried away by indignation, rashly decided to invade Taungu.

The Siamese army had been levied and equipped for an expedition to Hanthawadi. No trouble in Pegu had been expected, and the help of the Princes of Taungu and Arakan had been counted upon. As things had turned out, valuable time had been wasted in Pegu, Hanthawadi was in ruins, and the expected allies had proved false. Taungu lay a hundred and twenty miles away from Hanthawadi, and was approached by a difficult and mountainous road.

The invasion of Taungu was, therefore, undertaken under the most unfavourable conditions. The Prince of Arakan, it is true, again offered to help, but no reliance could be placed on him, and his offer was refused. The Siamese army was not strong enough, unaided, to capture Taungu. All attempts to take the city by storm failed, and at length, in May 1600, the siege was raised, after the Siamese had endured terrible sufferings from sickness and starvation. King Naresuen returned to Siam with the remnants of his army. This was his first failure. Yet this unsuccessful invasion of Burma was not utterly useless, for it was the indirect cause of the fall of Nanda Bhureng and the disintegration of the Burmese Empire.

On his return journey the King heard of further trouble at Chiengmai. P'ya Ram Dejo, who had been installed at Chiengsen, more or less as Siamese Commis-

sioner, held that his rank was at least equal to that of the Burmese Prince of Chiengmai. Disputes arose, and the Chiengmai dominions became divided into two sections, the northern portion governed by P'ya Ram Dejo and the southern by Tharawadi Min. The latter complained to King Naresuen, who sent up Prince Eka-t'otsarot to settle the dispute. This was done entirely to the satisfaction of the Prince of Chiengmai, no support being given to the pretensions of P'ya Ram Dejo.

This incident well illustrates the honourable character of King Naresuen. By encouraging P'ya Ram Dejo, or even by letting matters take their own course, a position would have been brought about which would have rendered it an easy matter to annex the whole dominions of Chiengmai to Siam. Tharawadi Min had, however, placed himself under the protection of Siam, and had since acted as a loyal vassal. King Naresuen therefore supported him, even though it was strongly against his own interest to do so.

Before returning to Siam, King Naresuen installed one P'ya Dala' as Siamese Governor of Martaban.

During the next four years Siam and Burma were at peace. This was owing to the disturbed condition of Burma, which rendered that country quite incapable of any serious acts of aggression. The ill-starred Nanda Bhureng, after being kept at Taungu for over eight months as a puppet ruler under the leading-strings of his faithless cousin, was poisoned in December 1600 at the instigation of the eldest son of his captor, thus bringing to a tragic end an inglorious reign. The Prince of Taungu claimed to be his successor; but two other sons of Bhureng Nong were ruling, at Prome and Ava respectively, as independent sovereigns. The Prince of

/ Dala : A small town on the Irawadi, opposite Rangoon.

Ava, Nyaung Yan Min, was generally regarded as the rightful heir to the crown of Burma. A coalition by the Princes of Taungu and Prome against him failed, owing to the death of the latter by drowning whilst fleeing from an attack by rebels. A usurper was set up as Prince of Prome, and Burma thus remained split up into three realms — Ava, Taungu, and Prome — over all three of which, however, the Prince of Ava claimed the right to rule. In 1603 he caused himself to be crowned as King of Burma, with the title of Sihasu T'ammaraaja.

While outwardly at peace with Burma, Siam became, in the year 1603, once more involved in Cambodian affairs. Since the expulsion of King Satta in 1598 there had been several rulers of Cambodia, and each of them had been found wanting. In 1602 the throne was occupied by a young wastrel named Keo Fa, whose rule was so detestable that the Queen-mother, supported by almost the whole nation, applied to King Naresuen to send back Prince Srisup'anna to rule over them. This prayer was granted. Prince Srisup'anna returned to Cambodia, and established his control with the aid of a Siamese army of 6,000 men.<sup>1</sup>

This King of Cambodia remained a faithful vassal of Siam until his death in 1618. He introduced into his Kingdom Siamese customs, garb and ceremonial.

By 1604 the whole of Pegu was under Siamese control, and out of the nineteen Shan States, three, namely Hsenwi, Muang Heng and Muang Nai, had likewise placed themselves under the protection of King Naresuen,

<sup>1</sup> These events are taken from the history of Cambodia, which, however, omits all mention of Siamese military intervention.

Morgan (Hakluyt Soc., vol. xxxix.) supports the Cambodian historian, and mentions that an army of 6,000 was sent by the King of Siam to Cambodia,

Laung Prasoet's history says: "In the year 1605 (1603) the army of the P'rachao Fai Na went and took Cambodia." It has been suggested that the "P'rachao Fai Na" was a son of King Naresuen. Contemporary writers, however, agree in stating that this was had no children. The "P'rachao Fai Na" was probably Prince Ekot'sarat.



whose influence thus extended to the confines of China. The remaining Shan States had been practically independent since the break-up of Nanda Bhureng's Empire. The King of Ava determined to regain control over Burma's lost Shan possessions. This was effected with ease until Müang Nai was reached. The Sawbwa<sup>1</sup> of that State appealed to Siam for aid. King Naresuen, at the head of 100,000 men, marched northwards on his last campaign.

At Chiangmai large reinforcements were forthcoming, and the King crossed the Salween in April 1605 with an army of some 200,000 men.

On arriving at Müang Hang the King fell ill, with a carbuncle on his cheek. Realising that his end was near, he sent hastily for his brother, who was still at Müang Fang. Prince Ekat'otsarot set out at once for Müang Hang. Three days after his arrival there, on May the 16th, 1605, King Naresuen breathed his last. "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in death they were not divided."

The little town of Müang Hang is known to-day as a local centre of the teak industry, and enjoys also some reputation as a miniature Monte Carlo.<sup>2</sup> Few of those who resort there for business or pleasure reflect that in Müang Hang died the greatest warrior who ever sat upon the throne of Siam.

King Naresuen was certainly a great man, and a King whose memory all Siamese may well hold in honour. His death, at the early age of fifty, was an incalculable loss to his country.

The new King, Ekat'otsarot, abandoned the expedition

<sup>1</sup> The Shan title of Sawbwa is the same as the Siamese "Chao Fa," meaning Celestial Prince; in Siam the title is reserved for sons of the King by a wife of Royal blood.

<sup>2</sup> Strictly speaking, Public gambling is not allowed in the Shan States.

into the Shan States, and took back his brother's remains to cremate at Ayut'ia. Hsenwi, Müang Nai and Müang Hang fell once more under Burmese domination. But the King of Ava did not long survive his adversary ; he fell ill and died on the return journey from the Shan States, and Maha T'ammaraaja, his son, reigned in his stead.

## CHAPTER XI

### REIGN OF KING EKAT'OTSAROT AND KING SONGT'AM (INT'ARAJA II)

KING EKAT'OTSAROT, though he had been known during his brother's reign as a capable General, proved, as King, to be a man of peace. During his short reign of five years, the White King, as he was called by European writers, devoted his time more to the reorganisation of the finances of Siam than to warlike pursuits. He thus gained among foreigners the reputation of being a "covetous man."

We learn from Siamese history that this King imposed a new tax, the exact nature of which is not known. It appears to have been a tax on shops and markets, and was probably one of the first money taxes to be levied in Siam. The earliest form of taxation was the "tribute," sent by provinces or feudatory states to the King. Such tribute might be merely nominal—such, for instance, as the gold and silver trees sent by some of the Malay Rajas even during the present century—or actual, such as supplies of timber, rice or fruits. In later years it became usual to make cash payments, not only in commutation of these "tributes" but also in commutation of personal services due by individuals to the Government.

It seems probable that King Ekat'otsarot's shop and market tax was the first tax levied regularly in cash, and perhaps it was this new system of taxation which gained for him the reputation of a "covetous man."

In King Ekat'otsarot's reign, Dutch ships and Dutch merchants began to visit Siam, and in the year 1608 Siamese ambassadors were sent to Holland and were received in audience by Prince Maurice of the Netherlands.

Friendly relations were also maintained with the Portuguese. In 1606 the first Portuguese Jesuit missionary, Balthazar de Sequeira, arrived at Ayut'ia. He had an exciting journey overland from Tenasserim, meeting on the way with "Rhinoceros, elephants and tigers, one of which latter tare in pieces one of his company before his eyes."

In the same year a Siamese embassy was sent to the Portuguese Viceroy at Goa.

During this reign a very large number of Japanese settled in Siam. They were well received by the King, who instituted a body-guard of Japanese, under the leadership of Yamada Nagamasa, who afterwards took so prominent a part in the history of the Kingdom.

On the advice of Yamada, friendly relations were opened between the King of Siam and the Shogun of Japan, Iyeyasu Minamoto. Compliments and presents were exchanged on several occasions. It is interesting to note that the Shogun was very anxious to procure firearms and ammunition from Siam, and expressed the opinion that Siamese gunpowder was of "surprisingly good quality."

King Ekat'otsarot, towards the end of his reign, appointed his eldest son, Prince Sut'at, to be Maha Uparat. The young Prince had not held this appointment for long when he was accused by one P'ra Nai Wai of plotting to gain possession of the throne. The King appears at this time to have been to some extent mentally

afflicted. He caused his son to be executed.<sup>1</sup> Shortly afterwards, a prey to remorse, he himself died, about the end of 1610.<sup>2</sup>

To judge by Siamese records, one might form rather a high opinion of King Ekat'otsarot, but contemporary foreign writers represent him as an odious man, cruel, greedy and suspicious.

King Ekat'otsarot was succeeded by Prince Int'araja, one of his sons by an inferior wife. This Prince had for some time been a Buddhist priest, and bore the name of P'ra Wimon T'am (Vimaladhamma). He is usually known as King Songt'am—the Just King.<sup>3</sup>

The new King's first act was to order the execution of P'ra Nai Wai, whom he regarded as responsible for the death of Prince Sut'at. Two hundred and eighty Japanese were among the adherents of P'ra Nai Wai. They at once rebelled, forced their way into the King's private apartments, and compelled him to sign in his own blood

<sup>1</sup> Siamese history says that the Prince poisoned himself, on being accused by his father of disloyalty. P. W. Floris (*Astley's Voyages*, vol. i.), says that the King "lying on his deathbed, caused his son to be slain." Turpin (*History of Siam*, Paris, 1771) says: "The King pronounced sentence of death on his innocent son." Floris was in Siam very shortly after the event in question.

<sup>2</sup> It might be supposed that an event so recent as the death of King Ekat'otsarot could be dated with absolute certainty. There exists, however, very conflicting evidence on this point, which has led some authorities to suppose that this King died in 1620. After examining all evidence available, the author has no hesitation in accepting 1610 as the correct date.

<sup>3</sup> The Siamese *P'ongsawadan* says that Ekat'otsarot was succeeded by his son, Prince Saowap'ak, who was blind in one eye. This King was deposed and executed by "P'ra Sri Sin," who was a priest under the name of P'ra Wimon T'am, and who became King Songt'am.

No contemporary European writers mention such a King as Saowap'ak. It is clear from the writings of van Vliet and Floris that King Songt'am was the son of King Ekat'otsarot, and succeeded him on the throne. This is further borne out by Turpin and G. Heylyn (*Cosmographie*, London, 1663). Other evidence is also available.

The Pali version of Siamese history, translated by Professor G. Coedès, likewise represents King Ekat'otsarot as being immediately succeeded by his son Int'araja (Songt'am).

The *P'ongsawadan's* unsupported evidence on this point is of little value, as most of the other statements made therein are wrong. For instance, the compilers were not even aware that King Songt'am was a son of King Ekat'otsarot. Moreover, they confounded him with his younger brother, Prince Sri Sin, who never became King. (See next chapter.)

It is possible that it was Prince Sri Sin, and not King Songt'am, who was a priest under the name of P'ra Wimon T'am.

an ignominious treaty accepting all the conditions which they saw fit to impose. These included the surrender of four prominent officials who had rendered themselves obnoxious to the Japanese, the grant of various residential and commercial privileges, and the delivery to the insurgents of some of the chief priests as security for the performance of the King's promises. The unfortunate officials, on being surrendered to the Japanese, were immediately massacred.

The Japanese then sacked the town of Ayut'ia, and "so departed with great treasure, after much violence." They proceeded to P'etchaburi, where their leader set himself up almost like an independent King.

The confusion into which the Kingdom had been thrown by the excesses of the Japanese was further aggravated by an invasion of the King of Luang P'rabang, P'ra Wongsā. The Luang P'rabang army advanced as far as Lopburi, their ostensible object being to expel the Japanese. King Songt'am was not to be imposed upon by this pretext. He managed to collect a large army, and first attacked the Japanese at P'etchaburi, driving them out of that stronghold. He then, on April 5th, 1612, gave battle to the Luang P'rabang forces and defeated them. The whole Luang P'rabang army fled in disorder, and King Wongsā himself narrowly escaped capture. He was forced to abandon his elephant, which fell into the hands of the Siamese. but he managed to flee on horseback.

It would appear that the "Just King" did not repudiate entirely the promises which he had made, under duress, to the Japanese. They were not all expelled from the Kingdom, and later in this reign we find that a Japanese body-guard was still employed in

palace, under the command of Yamada, who was in high favour, and bore the title of P'ya Senap'imuk.'

The year 1612 was a noteworthy one in another respect. The first English commercial establishment in Siam was opened in that year. Dutch merchants had opened a factory a few years previously.

The first British ship, the *Globe*, anchored in the harbour of Patani on the 23rd of June, 1612. She was commanded by Captain Anthony Hippon, and had on board Peter Williamson Floris and other merchants. A factory was opened at Patani, and the *Globe* then went on to Ayut'ia, arriving there on the 15th of August.

On September 17th, 1612, the English factors were received in audience by the King, and presented to him a letter from King James I. The Siamese monarch was extremely gratified, and gave to each of the factors a little golden cup and a piece of clothing. The East India Company founded factories at Ayut'ia and at Patani before the end of that year.

Foreign traders—British, Dutch, Portuguese and Japanese—were very active in Siam throughout this reign. King Songt'am deserves, in fact, to be regarded as the first King of modern Siam, for it was under him that the habit of free intercourse with foreign Powers became well established. The policy thus inaugurated by him has been adhered to by all the rulers of Siam down to the present day.

/ Prince Damrong has suggested the following very probable explanation of the favour shown to the Japanese, in spite of their excesses. There were a number of peaceable Japanese settlers in Siam, from among whom the bodyguard was recruited. There was also a gang of more or less piratical "birds of passage." These were the people who attacked King Songt'am's palace. They were probably expelled from the Kingdom, doubtless with the aid of their more loyal fellow-countrymen.

At that time Japanese pirates were a pest all over the Far East. In December 1605 the English navigator, John Davis, lost his life in a fight with Japanese pirates off Patani. In the same year, and again in 1610, the King of Cambodia complained to the Shogun of Japan of the acts of piracy committed by Japanese traders in his ports.

Foreign trade was placed under the control of the P'rak'lang, or Minister of the Treasury and Finance, and most of the business came ultimately to be transacted by him, or by one of his subordinates, acting on behalf of the King. The King himself was thus the principal import and export merchant in the country. The result of this was not so inconvenient as it would be in a modern State, since all the revenues of the country were, in any case, the personal property of the King, and by making large direct profits through trading, he was, presumably, able to manage with a proportionately smaller amount of revenue derived from taxation.

In the year 1612 there was further trouble with Burma. In 1602 a certain Portuguese adventurer, Philip de Brito, had been sent by the King of Arakan on an official mission to the town of Syriam. De Brito succeeded, by force and by guile, in making himself, in a few years, an independent sovereign. In 1612 de Brito allied himself with P'ya Dala, the Governor of the Siamese possessions in Pegu, for the purpose of attacking Taungu. This attack was presumably made under Siamese auspices, in order to punish Natchin NOUNG, the young Prince of Taungu, who had succeeded his father in 1607. Natchin NOUNG had, if we trust Siamese history, placed himself under the protection of Ayut'ia, but had, not long afterwards, made a complete submission to the King of Ava. He had not much choice in the matter, as Maha T'ammaraaja of Ava had appeared before the walls of Taungu at the head of an overwhelming force. De Brito had entered into an alliance with Natchin NOUNG, and he regarded the submission of his ally to Ava as an act of treachery to himself. He therefore gladly joined with P'ya Dala, to avenge the supposed wrongs of the King of Siam as well as his own. Taungu was captured, and the Prince taken away a



prisoner to Syriam. But P'ya Dala and de Brito quarrelled over the spoils, and when, before the end of the same year (1612), the King of Ava attacked Syriam, de Brito was left to defend himself unaided. His own subjects hated him, for he was a fanatical Catholic, and had treated the Buddhist religion with the vilest contempt. They admitted the Burmese army by night, in April 1613. De Brito was executed, with fearful tortures, and the unfortunate Prince of Taungu also fell a victim to the vengeance of the King of Ava. P'ya Dala, thinking that his turn would certainly come next, made full submission to the conqueror. Thus Siam lost, almost without knowing it, most of the Peguan possessions which King Naresuen had won by so much hard fighting.

Later in 1613 the Siamese managed, by way of retaliation, to strike a shrewd blow at the King of Ava—or of Burma, as he may from now onwards fairly be called. One of the King's brothers, the Sagaing Prince, was sent as Governor of Re (or Ye), a town not far to the north of Tavoy. The Governor of Tavoy made a surprise attack on Re, captured the Burmese Prince, and sent him as a prisoner to Ayut'ia.

The King of Burma immediately attacked and captured Tavoy. He then went on to Tenasserim, but the Siamese were ready for him, and with the aid of some Portuguese mercenaries they drove him off with considerable loss (January 1614). They then retook Tavoy. This placed Siam in what was at that time her normal territorial condition. Pegu was but a trophy of war. Tavoy was then regarded as Siamese soil.

As previously mentioned, Tharawadi Min, the Burmese Prince of Chiangmai, had, in 1595, placed himself under Siamese protection, and ever since that year the Chiangmai dominions had been more or less dependent upon

Siam. In 1607 the old Prince died, after a reign of nearly twenty-eight years. His eldest son, who succeeded him, died in 1609. The second son, after a brief reign, was forced by the Chiengmai nobles to abdicate, and the youngest son, Thadogyaw, became Prince of Chiengmai in 1611.

The King of Burma now determined to re-annex Chiengmai. It may easily be supposed that the spectacle of a family so nearly related to himself ruling Chiengmai as vassals of the King of Siam was extremely galling. He first tried to split up the Chiengmai dominions by installing one P'ya Chaban as Prince of Chiengsen, under Burmese tutelage; later, in 1614, he invaded Chiengmai, in order to depose the young Prince Thadogyaw. The latter, for some reason, abandoned the city of Chiengmai, choosing rather to protect his throne by fortifying and defending Lampang. The siege was long and arduous, and would have resulted in a Burmese defeat had not the Chief of Nan lent his aid at the critical moment, supplying provisions of which the besiegers were in urgent need. The young Prince died during the siege, or according to some accounts, was executed by the King of Burma when Lampang fell,<sup>1</sup> and the Chief of Nan was installed to rule Chiengmai as a vassal of Burma.

Among the prisoners taken by the Burmese on this occasion was an Englishman named Thomas Samuel who had been living at Chiengmai for a few years as Agent of the East India Company. He was taken to Pegu, where he died not long afterwards.

Siamese history records no attempt to assist the Prince of Chiengmai. From foreign sources, however, we gather that a Siamese army was sent to the north. It

<sup>1</sup> The trouble in those days was that you were certain to be regarded as a traitor by one King or another.

arrived, we must suppose, too late to save Lampang, but during the next few years hostilities between the Burmese and Siamese were maintained in Chiengmai dominions, as a result of which foreign trade in those regions came to a standstill.

The monarchs of both the rival Kingdoms made a bid for Portuguese assistance. The King of Portugal, writing to his Viceroy in India in January 1618, said: "The King of Siam offers Martaban, which at present he does not possess, and he of Ava the spoils of Arakan, which he does not either hold in his power." The Viceroy was therefore ordered to temporise with both combatants, entertaining them with hopes, and "drawing from each what may be obtained for the State."

Perhaps the two Kings got tired of being played with by the wily Portuguese, for in the year 1618 they concluded a peace, or rather a truce, the terms of which included a stipulation that Burma was to relinquish all claims to Chiengmai, and that Siam was to cede Martaban to Burma.

The Chief of Nan continued to rule Chiengmai under Siamese tutelage.

King Songt'am acted wisely in composing his differences with Burma, for danger was now threatening him on his eastern frontier.

King Srisup'anma of Cambodia died in 1618. He had remained faithful to his oath, and had never attempted to throw off the Siamese yoke, though he must often have felt tempted to do so when Siam was in difficulties. His eldest son, Jai Jett'a, who succeeded him, did not apply for Siamese authority to assume the crown, but signalled his accession by proclaiming Cambodian independence.

<sup>1</sup> Floris says that Cambodia rebelled in 1612, at the time of the Luang P'rabang invasion. No mention of this is to be found elsewhere.

Before describing the war which resulted from the revolt of Cambodia, it may interest English readers to learn that in 1618, on the outbreak of war between England and Holland, hostilities were carried on by these rival Powers in Siamese territory, regardless of such details as breaches of neutrality. On July 17th, 1619, three Dutch men-of-war, manned by 800 men, attacked two British ships, the *Sampson* and the *Hound*, in the harbour of Patani. "After five hours' fight, eleuen of the men of the Samson were slaine outright, and five and thirtie men of the same ship were wounded, maymed and dismembered. Captain Iordan was Captaine of the Samson, and did hang up a flagge of truce, and withall sent Thomas Hackwell to parlee with the Netherlanders about a peace." While the negotiations were going on, Captain Jourdain, suspecting no treachery, showed himself on the deck of the *Sampson*, whereupon the Dutch, "espying him, most treacherously and cruelly shot at him with a musket, and shot him in the bodie neere the heart, of which wound hee dyed within half an houre after."<sup>1</sup>

The two ships were seized by the Dutch, and a great many English were taken prisoners. They were treated with great barbarity, numbers of them being sent to Japan in chains. The English on shore were only saved from massacre by the intervention of the Queen of Patani.<sup>2</sup>

Early in 1620 peace was restored, but a great deal of rivalry and ill-feeling persisted between the English and the Dutch in Siam.<sup>3</sup> The numbers of both nations were,

<sup>1</sup> *Purchas, His Pilgrims*, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> It is stated that Patani was at that time always ruled by a woman. There was certainly a Queen of Patani in 1679, who can hardly have been the same one mentioned here.

<sup>3</sup> It is delightful to reflect that jealousy between rival Powers is utterly unknown in Siam at the present time.

however, not long afterwards greatly decreased owing to the closing of their factories at Patani and Ayut'ia, which had been found unprofitable.

King Songt'am, so far as we know, took no exception to this fighting between foreigners at Patani. When, however, liberties of this kind were taken nearer to his capital, he was quite ready to take action. We learn from van Vliet that in 1624 the Portuguese captured a Netherlands yacht in Siamese waters. The King compelled the Portuguese to restore the yacht, and from that time onwards treated all the Portuguese residents in Siam with marked disfavour. In 1628 a Siamese junk was sunk by the Portuguese, and at the time of King Songt'am's death, at the end of that year, a state of war existed between Siam and Portugal.

We must now retrace our steps to describe the Cambodian war.

In 1622 King Songt'am undertook an invasion of Cambodia, in order to reduce King Jai Jett'a to submission. Two large armies were fitted out, one being despatched by water and the other by land. The King himself accompanied the land army. "After the Armada (consisting of many armed galleys and ships of less importance) had been lying for a long time in the river of Cambodia (without going into action or doing anything), it returned again. The Cambodians, encouraged by the departure of the Siamese boats, went to meet the army which came by land. They united in the valleys and low fields and by false guides brought the Siamese from the good roads. They attacked the Siamese and many thousands of men were slain. Many great men, elephants and horses were slain in that unfortunate battle. The Cambodians took about 250 living elephants."

From this time until the end of his reign King Songt'am's whole foreign policy was directed towards obtaining foreign aid for a further invasion of Cambodia. Neither the English nor the Dutch, however, appear to have entertained very friendly feelings towards the King. A good deal of polite correspondence was exchanged, presents were sent to His Majesty, but no material assistance was forthcoming. As for the "Portugals," Siam was at this time on very bad terms with their country, and during the last few years of King Songt'am's reign most of them were languishing in Siamese prisons.

In the end Cambodia was left alone.

In the year 1626 the arrangement, made in 1617, whereby Chiengmai was not to be interfered with by Burma, was infringed by the Burmese. The two brothers of King Maha T'ammaraaja of Burma were engaged in an expedition destined to subdue Kengrung and Luang P'rabang, and they took the opportunity, while passing through Chiengmai territory, to impose once more the Burmese yoke upon the sorely tried Laos.

King Songt'am kept up friendly intercourse with the Shogun of Japan during his whole reign. It is curious to find that he was extremely anxious to obtain "noble steeds" from Japan. The modern breed of Japanese ponies is not very much admired. One remark made by the Shogun, in a letter dated September 1623, is worthy of preservation. After telling King Songt'am not to hesitate for a moment if he desired to exterminate any Japanese merchants in Cambodia who might venture to assist the Cambodians in resisting Siam, he says: "Merchants are fond of gain and given up to greed, and abominable fellows of this kind ought not to escape punishment."

In Siam itself King Songt'am's name is chiefly remembered on account of the discovery, in his reign, of the P'rabat, or supposed footprint of Buddha, at the foot of a hill to the north-east of Ayut'ia, now known as the P'rabat mountain. Whether this gigantic footprint was an ancient carved P'rabat, which was merely rediscovered at that time, or whether it was a natural indentation in the rock, and has since been touched up, can never now be known. Few modern Buddhists believe that the great Teacher was of superhuman stature. Nevertheless this curious relic is entitled to respect, as an object venerated by many generations of pious Buddhists. Even at the present time thousands flock every year, in the month of February, to worship on the P'rabat mountain.

It is not certain whether any Maha Uparat was appointed by King Songt'am, but it is probable that his younger brother, Prince Sri Sin, held this position, since all contemporary writers regarded him as the lawful heir to the throne. When, however, towards the end of the year 1628, the King fell seriously ill, the question of the succession gave rise to a great deal of intrigue. One party, headed by P'ya Kalahom, was in favour of Prince Sri Sin. P'ya Sri Worawong, the King's cousin, espoused the cause of Prince Jett'a, the King's eldest son, aged fifteen. Both parties tried to enlist the sympathies of Yamada, now known as P'ya Senap'imuk, and his 600 Japanese. Yamada, while putting P'ya Kalahom off with evasive answers, was secretly in league with P'ya Sri Worawong.

In the end, the dying monarch, blinded by natural affection, proclaimed his son as his successor, thereby, as will be seen, sealing the doom of his whole family. Having taken this fatal step, King Songt'an died, aged

only thirty-eight, on the 22nd December, 1628, to the great regret of his subjects.

Van Vliet tell us that King Songt'am, who was personally known to him, was good, liberal, fond of study, not warlike, but devoted to religion. He gave up most of his time to religious and ecclesiastical affairs, and to the laws of the Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> He was generous to the priests and to the poor, and repaired or constructed more temples than any previous King. He kept great state, and liked to see his nobles live magnificently. Forcigners and Siamese alike sang his praises, and regarded him as a good and just ruler, almost as a saint.'

Siam was not to see his like again for many years.

<sup>1</sup> Turpin, writing 141 years later, describes King Songt'am as a "crowned monster," and attributes to him the most fearful barbarities. Turpin quotes no authority, and has probably confounded King Songt'am with King Prasat T'ong, who was quite capable of committing the cruelties which Turpin attributes to King Songt'am.



## CHAPTER XII

### REIGNS OF KING JETT'A, KING AT'ITYAWONG AND KING PRASAT T'ONG

THE young King Jett'a, aged only fifteen, was a mere puppet in the hands of P'ya Sri Worawong. His accession, already unpopular, was rendered more so by a series of brutal murders. P'ya Kalahom and all his principal supporters fell victims to the fury of P'ya Sri Worawong. An unsuccessful bid for popular favour was made by the pardon of numerous criminals on the occasion of the coronation. P'ya Sri Worawong himself assumed the title and office of P'ya Kalahom, and made his younger brother P'ya Sri Worawong.

The Kalahom had had a very remarkable career. He was born about the year 1600, being a son of P'ya Sri T'ammatt'irat, a Royal Chamberlain, whose younger sister was the mother of King Songt'am and he was thus the cousin of that monarch. In his youth he was known as P'ra-ong Lai.<sup>1</sup> From a humble position he rose to be, at the age of eighteen, Chief Page to King Songt'am. He was always in trouble and disgrace. On one occasion he was imprisoned for attacking the Mock King at the Ploughing Festival.<sup>2</sup> Later he was implicated in a plot

<sup>1</sup> Some contemporary writers say that he was of Royal blood, and the title P'ra-ong Lai seems to bear this out. There is a story to the effect that he was an unacknowledged son of King Ekatt'otsarot, born at Bang-pa-in. He was given a title by that monarch at the early age of sixteen, which shows that he enjoyed high favour. Even in his lifetime there seems to have been some doubt about his origin.

<sup>2</sup> This ancient Brahminical ceremony is still performed every year. A high official acts as "Mock King" and in former times really exercised, during the festivities, some of the Royal powers. His person was inviolable. To attack him was thus a most heinous offence.

against King Songt'am's brothers, Prince Sri Sin and Prince T'ong. After spending several years in prison, he was released in 1622, and greatly distinguished himself in the unfortunate expedition to Cambodia in that year. A year later he was discovered in an intrigue with one of the ladies of Prince Sri Sin, and went back to gaol. On his release he appears to have been tamed to some extent. He was made P'ya Sri Worawong, and was high in the favour of King Songt'am during the last few years of his reign.

It will be observed that he had good reasons for opposing the accession of Prince Sri Sin to the throne. But the exclusion of the Prince was not enough. The new Kalahom was determined on his destruction. The Prince had taken the precaution of becoming a priest. Yamada undertook the unworthy task of luring him away from his sanctuary. He visited the Prince and persuaded him that the Japanese troops would aid him to seize the throne. Believing this, the Prince discarded the yellow robe. He was at once seized and condemned to die. He was sent to P'etchaburi, and there cast into a pit to perish of starvation.

One of the Prince's adherents, Luang Mongkon, rescued him in a very remarkable manner. He dug another pit, communicating with the one in which the Prince was confined. The corpse of a slave was introduced by night, and dressed in the Prince's clothes, while the Prince escaped. The guards, thinking their prisoner dead, filled up the pit with earth, and reported to Ayut'ia that Prince Sri Sin was dead and buried.'

Prince Sri Sin then managed to raise a large force, seized several cities, and was crowned as King of Siam. In the end he was, however, defeated and captured.

<sup>1</sup> This is van Vliet's account. The incident is related in rather a different form in the book called *The Story of King Naresuan*.

Before meeting his death, which was inflicted in the usual way, by beating him to death with a sandalwood club, he solemnly warned the young King against trusting P'ya Kalahom.'

Luang Mongkon, after making a vain attempt to murder P'ya Kalahom, was also executed. He was a man of Herculean strength, and before dying, managed to burst his chains, strangle one executioner, and very nearly accounted for another. He had been offered his life if he would enter the King's service. "How can I do so?" he asked. "The King is dead." One is grateful to van Vliet for having preserved the name of this brave man.

After the removal of Prince Sri Sin, King Jett'a was encouraged by P'ya Kalahom to indulge in all kinds of folly and dissipation, until everyone was thoroughly tired of him.

He had been less than two years on the throne when the end came. P'ya Kalahom, little by little, had been usurping the external trappings of Royalty. The limit was reached when he cremated the body of his deceased mother<sup>2</sup> in a style equal to that usual at a Royal cremation, and caused all the principal functionaries to attend. The young King's jealousy was at length aroused, and he uttered the most violent threats against P'ya Kalahom. The latter, professing to think himself in danger, called together all his supporters and attacked the palace. The King's partisans were defeated, and he himself fled to a temple. He was captured and executed, together with his mother. Before dying, he bitterly reproached P'ya

<sup>1</sup> One is reminded of the warning of Queen Margaret to Queen Elizabeth (Woodville), *Richard III*, act i., scene 3:

"Why strew'st thou honey on that bottled spider

Whose deadly web ensareth thee about?

Fool! Fool! Thou whet'st a knife to kill thyself."

<sup>2</sup> Van Vliet says it was his father's cremation

Kalahom, and accused him of having poisoned King Songt'am—very probably a true accusation. P'ya Kamp'eng-ram, who was supposed to have designs upon the throne, was also executed not long after.

HAVING thus got rid of the King and of P'ya Kamp'eng-ram, P'ya Kalahom was disgusted to find the steps to the throne barred by his accomplice Yamada. The wily Japanese had supported the claims of P'ya Kamp'eng-ram to the throne, and had displayed great grief when his nominee was executed. He now insisted upon setting up as King the little Prince At'ityawong, a younger son of King Songt'am, aged only ten.

P'ya Kalahom determined to get Yamada out of the way. The Governor of Nak'on Srit'ammarat was accused of rebellion, and Yamada and his Japanese were sent down to subdue him. Yamada was at the same time authorised to assume the position of Governor of Nak'on Srit'ammarat. He was speedily successful, and, happy in his new position as ruler of a semi-independent province, was content, for the time being, to refrain from interfering with the ambitious designs of P'ya Kalahom.

The "bottled spider" first caused himself to be crowned as Regent, and compelled the young King to enter a monastery, whence he was, however, quickly removed in order to be clubbed to death, after a reign of little more than a month.<sup>1</sup> The poor boy piteously denounced the cruelty of the man who had set him on a throne only to deprive him of his life; but there was no mercy to be expected from a monster who knew no law but his own ambition.

P'ya Kalahom now became King. He is known in history as King Prasat Tong—the King of the Golden

<sup>1</sup> According to Siamese history, At'ityawong was not executed until 1637, after a rebellion in which he was implicated. Van Vliet, who was practically an eye-witness, must be believed on this point.

Palace. He was the first monarch since the foundation of Ayut'ia, with the single exception of K'un Worawongsa, who must frankly be called a usurper, for he had no kind of hereditary claim to the throne.'

The usurper's position, at the beginning of his reign, was none too secure. He was at war with Portugal, and one of his first acts was to clap every Portuguese in the Kingdom into gaol, where they remained for three years. Nak'on Srit'ammarat was in a disturbed condition. Yamada had been poisoned shortly after becoming Governor, and his son, Oin Yamada, was engaged in hostilities with the party of the ex-Governor. After many vicissitudes, he and most of his Japanese retired to Cambodia. Thence they shortly returned to Ayut'ia, accompanied by a large number of Japanese who had been expelled from the capital in 1629. The usurper did not at all approve of the presence of all these Japanese, rightly thinking that those who had helped to put him on the throne might as easily put him down again.<sup>2</sup> He therefore made up his mind to be rid of the turbulent Japanese once for all. The Japanese quarter of Ayut'ia was suddenly attacked by night, during the flood season of 1632. Many of the Japanese were ruthlessly butchered, but a large number of them escaped by boat. They were pursued by the Siamese, and a sharp fight was kept up from Ayut'ia down to the sea, with heavy losses on both sides. The majority of the Japanese made good their escape to Cambodia.

The usurper's resentment against the Japanese was perhaps further inflamed by the fact that the Shogun of Japan had refused to recognise him, and had declined

<sup>1</sup> Unless we accept the story that he was a natural son of King Ekat'otsarot.

<sup>2</sup> Van Vliet says that the Japanese "were not afraid to declare that they would seize the King on his throne."

to receive his envoys. In Japan it had long been the established custom for the Emperors to live in seclusion, while others reigned in their name. Scrupulous respect was, however, shown to their persons. A man who had ruthlessly slain the rightful heirs to the throne, and had usurped the title, as well as the power, of King, was looked upon in Japan as a ruffian devoid of all human decency.

The Queen of Patani shared the opinions of the Shogun of Japan. She refused to send the usual tribute, and declared herself independent of King Prasat T'ong, whom she described to a Dutch visitor as a "rascal, murderer and traitor."

Cambodia was hostile, and was supposed to be waiting for a suitable opportunity to invade Siam, aided by the expelled Japanese.<sup>1</sup>

Chiengmai was under Burmese dominion. An attempt at rebellion was made in 1630, when the Prince of Chiengmai<sup>2</sup> declared himself independent and captured Chiengsen. But the new King of Burma, T'ado T'ammaraja,<sup>3</sup> once more invaded the northern principality in 1631. After a long siege, Chiengmai was captured by the Burmese in April 1632. The Prince was deposed, and one P'ya Luang T'ip'anot was set up as Burmese Viceroy at Chiengmai.

It will thus be seen that King Prasat T'ong occupied, at the outset of his reign, a very isolated position. His only foreign friends were the Dutch,<sup>4</sup> who espoused his

<sup>1</sup> Cambodian history states that the King of Cambodia invaded Siam in 1630. There seems to be no confirmation of this statement elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> This Prince was the Chief of Nan, who was appointed by the Burmese to be Prince of Chiengmai in 1614.

<sup>3</sup> King Maha T'ammaraja of Burma was murdered in 1626 by Minderippa, one of his sons, who proclaimed himself King. He was deposed and executed in 1629 by T'ado T'ammaraja of Prome, a brother of Maha T'ammaraja. This King is called Thalun in Harvey's *History of Burma*.

<sup>4</sup> The English took no part in Siamese affairs, as their factory, closed in 1622, had not been reopened.

cause, and promised to assist him against the Portuguese and Cambodians. In 1630 and 1632 several Dutch vessels were sent to Siam for this purpose. Prince Frederick Henry of the Netherlands, brother and successor to Prince Maurice, sent a very flattering letter to King Prasat T'ong, congratulating him on his accession, and containing some touching condolences on the death of his predecessor—doubtless well meant, but not very tactful.

The new Governor of Nak'on Srit'ammarat, following the example of the Queen of Patani, refused to send tribute. The King himself led an expedition against the rebel city in 1632, destroyed it, and removed most of the inhabitants to Ayut'ia. Van Vliet relates that the King, on setting forth to attack Nak'on Srit'ammarat, swore to offer up the first four women he met, as a sacrifice. On leaving Ayut'ia he met four young girls in a boat, on whom he fulfilled his vow.

This story is typical of the cruelty and barbarity of this atrocious man. His whole reign was a series of murders. In 1635, one of his daughters having died and been cremated, a part of her flesh, for some reason, remained unconsumed. Attributing this to magic (for he was as credulous as he was cruel) he indulged in a perfect orgy of murder and torture. It is needless to disgust the reader with the detailed description of these scenes. Over three thousand persons lost their lives, as the tyrant saw in the death of his daughter a good excuse for ridding himself of those whom he suspected of disapproving of his usurpation of the crown. One of the daughters and two of the sons of King Songt'am were sacrificed among the rest.

The usurper had early determined to extirpate all the scions of the Royal Family. In 1633 he had caused three

infant Princes to be executed. In 1635 a blind Prince who had for some time previously been an object of suspicion, was inveigled into a dispute with a soldier, and punished with death.<sup>1</sup>

An expedition which was undertaken in 1632 against rebellious Patani was unsuccessful. The Patanese repulsed the Siamese and inflicted several severe defeats upon them. According to Dutch witnesses this was due to the bungling methods of the Siamese General, but the blame was thrown on the Dutch, who had been expected to assist with two ships, which never turned up.

In 1634 a more serious attempt was made to subdue Patani. An army of over 30,000 men was raised at Ayut'ia, and was sent under the command of P'ya P'ra-k'lang to Nak'on Srit'ammarat, accompanied by a great many elephants, ponies, guns and ammunition. There they were to be joined by other troops, sent by sea, and by armies to be raised in the Peninsula. The total force available was estimated at between 50,000 and 60,000 men. The Dutch again promised to assist with six large vessels. The few Japanese remaining at Ayut'ia were also ordered to take part in this expedition.

Owing to gross mismanagement, this campaign, like the first, was an utter failure. Instead of waiting for the Dutch fleet, the Siamese attacked Patani, and were repulsed with severe losses. Their provisions then ran short, and they returned to Singora. The Dutch fleet, on reaching Patani, found that the Siamese had departed.

<sup>1</sup> The identity of this blind Prince is doubtful. Van Vliet says that he was a son of the "Grand Roy," and had had his eyesight injured by fire under orders from King Naresuen, as a consequence of which he had renounced his claim to the throne. As King Naresuen died in 1605, this Prince can hardly have been a son of King Songt'am, who was born about 1590. It is possible that he was an elder brother of King Songt'am, who had been intended to succeed King Ekot'otsarot, and that he is the person referred to in the *P'ongsawadejan* as "King Saowap'ak." (See Note to p. 160) Saowap'ak is stated to have been blind in one eye.



The King of Siam had one General beheaded and several others severely punished. He appears to have been satisfied with the action of the Dutch, and returned to them five thousand florins, being half of the duty paid by them that year for the right to trade with Siam.

On January 1st, 1636, P'ya Pitsanulok, one of the most influential men in the Kingdom, was arrested for having falsely accused the King's brother of plotting to gain the crown. On January 22nd he was publicly cut in two by the executioner.

In the same year (1636) extensive preparations were made to subdue Patani, but an embassy was first sent to urge the Queen of Patani to submit. By the advice of the Dutch, the embassy was well received, and Patanese envoys were sent in April to Ayut'ia to beg forgiveness, and to present the customary gold and silver trees in token of submission.

Although the King outwardly professed to be satisfied with the assistance given by the Dutch against rebellious Patani, he now regarded them with less favour. His irritation was increased by the receipt of some very stiffly worded letters from the Dutch Governor-General at Batavia, who complained that he had been misled about some consignments of rice which had been promised him. On December 10th, 1636, two of the Dutchmen employed by the Dutch Company had an altercation with some priests, and they and their friends were later attacked and roughly handled by a large crowd of Siamese. The next day they were charged with attacking the house of the King's brother, and two of their number were sentenced to be trampled to death by elephants. Van Vliet, by distributing presents to the King and principal officials, managed to obtain their release,

after they had been exposed all day in public, bound hand and foot. He was forced to sign an undertaking that all the Dutch in the Kingdom pledged themselves absolutely to obey all the orders of the P'rak'lang.

It may be remarked that the King was drunk on this occasion. It was, in fact, his usual custom to be under the influence of drink thrice daily. "This drunkenness," says van Vliet, "which occurs very often, and often reaches a dangerous limit, has caused many evils during his reign and is frequently the reason why innocent blood has been shed."

In March 1688 occurred the beginning of the year 1000 of the Chulasakarat Era. King Prasat T'ong became obsessed with the idea that some frightful calamity would overwhelm the world to mark the thousandth year of the Era. He therefore determined, if possible, to avert the calamity by altering the name of the year. The old Siamese Calendar was run on a triple system; firstly, there was the Chulasakarat number of the year, secondly, each year bore the name of an animal, of which there were twelve, recurring in regular order; and thirdly, it was numbered from one to ten. The combined cycles of twelve animals and ten numbers completed themselves every sixty years, when the first animal (the Rat) coincided with the number One. The year 1000 (A.D. 1688-9) was the year of the Tiger, numbered Ten. The King's plan was to "camouflage" the year by calling it the year of the Pig, while retaining the number Ten. This meant leaving out the names of nine of the animals, and thereby disorganising the combined cycles of sixty years.

Delighted with this ingenious scheme, the King wrote

1. The Rat; 2. The Ox. 3. The Tiger; 4. The Hare; 5. The Dragon; 6. The Serpent; 7. The Horse; 8. The Goat; 9. The Monkey; 10. The Cock; 11. The Dog; 12. The Pig (or in northern Siam, the Elephant).

to T'ado T'ammaraaja of Burma,' suggesting that it should be adopted in Burma as well. The Burmese monarch probably felt little interest in the matter, as the "animal cycle" was not in general use in Burma. Moreover, he had already averted all danger of ill luck by holding a huge ordination ceremony, at which 1,000 youths, one for each year of the Era, were initiated into the Buddhist priesthood. He therefore sent an embassy to Ayut'ia, with a letter returning an unfavourable reply. King Prasat T'ong flew into a passion, and dismissed the Burmese envoys, after heaping insults upon them.

The alteration in the "animal cycle" was never generally adopted, even in Siam.

In 1639, the usurper indulged in another outburst of fury against the Dutch. The Dutch Company had put forward a certain claim against the Siamese Government, which the King, after first promising to meet, later repudiated. Annoyed at the King's fickleness, van Vliet used much stronger language than was wise, and it was reported that he had uttered a threat to bring a Dutch fleet to attack Ayut'ia. The King, who was, as usual, drunk when this report was made to him, at first ordered the immediate execution of every Dutchman in Siam. He was induced to grant them one day's grace in which to leave the country, failing which they were to be trampled to death by elephants, and the factory given up to plunder. The whole capital was thrown into confusion. Troops were called out, cannon pointed at the Dutch factory, and all the Dutchmen were arrested and kept in confinement for some time. The King, however, changed his mind about having them trampled to death, and in the end released them, and bestowed various marks of favour upon van Vliet. For some time,

<sup>1</sup> Called *Thahn* in Harvey's *History of Burma*.

however, numbers of troops were kept under arms, and all kinds of warlike preparations were made, with the object of showing the Dutch that the King was ready and able to capture Batavia.

In November 1641 a letter was received from the Prince of Orange, and also one from the Governor-General of the Dutch Indies; accompanied by many rare gifts. The King received the Prince's letter in an unusually ceremonious manner, and said that he had never before been favoured with so pleasing a missive: But the Dutch probably knew better by this time than to be impressed by these changes of face. Van Vliet, writing several years later, said that real friendship between Siam and the Netherlands was impossible "unless the disgrace which we have suffered has been washed away by the sword, in which may God Almighty help."

In 1648 Singora became troublesome, and an expedition was sent to subdue it. The Dutch Council at Batavia gave orders that some Dutch vessels were to be sent to help the Siamese fleet, in the hope of placating the fickle King. No record remains of the result of this expedition, but it would appear that Singora was not subdued until much later. In 1654 we find the Dutch once more at loggerheads with King Prasat T'ong on account of their negligence in not having sent twenty ships to assist in attacking Singora. Their Agent, Westerwolt, the successor of van Vliet, was treated with great indignity, and when he threatened to leave Siam he was informed that any attempt to do so would result in his being trampled to death by elephants, together with all his compatriots.

Finally the King had to be told that owing to the rupture of relations with England the Dutch could not

spare any ships.' This displeasing news was conveyed together with many valuable presents. The latter apparently placated the capricious tyrant, for he treated the Dutch with greater courtesy, though his expedition to Singora had to be put off. The army, which had been waiting at Nak'on Srit'ammarat, was recalled, and the General in command was thrown into irons.

In 1655 another attempt was made to subdue Singora, but "the Admiral who had undertaken to overcome the place with the naval force ran away, so that they returned to Siam with shame."

King Prasat T'ong was responsible, during his reign, for a considerable amount of legislation. One is unwilling to admire any of the measures of this execrable man, but it must be admitted that his legislative activities were not unsuccessful.

The most interesting of the Laws associated with this King's name are the following:

I. The Law of Appeal, promulgated in A.D. 1623.

The underlying principle of this Law was not to provide, as in modern times, for Appeals concerning the facts or Law on which the original judgment was based, but an Appeal was considered rather in the nature of an Appeal against the Judge, for injustice, favouritism, or slackness. A great many grounds for appealing against a Judge were admitted, and the Judge hearing the Appeal was empowered to fine the Judge of the Court below if the complaints brought by the parties were found correct. On the other hand, groundless Appeals might result in the punishment of the Appellant. This last provision might perhaps be useful in modern Siam, where Appeals are often made on very frivolous grounds.

<sup>1</sup> Cromwell declared war on the Dutch in July 1652, but the news of this probably did not reach the Far East until well on in 1653.

## 2. The Law on Debt Slavery, A.D. 1637.

Slavery, though unknown in the golden days of King Ramk'ahheng and his successors at Suk'ot'ai, had always been a feature of the Siamese social system under the Kings of Ayut'ia. Slavery in any country must always be inseparable from cruelty and abuses, but once the system is admitted, the Siamese Law on the subject does not appear unreasonable, and does not by any means ignore the interests of the slaves. There were provisions in the Law for the punishment of masters who killed or injured their slaves, and many means were provided to permit of slaves regaining their liberty. Unfortunately, as was inevitable, the more merciful provisions of this Law were too often disregarded, and the lot of a debt-slave in Siam was often a very miserable one, even in modern times, until the year 1905, when King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) performed the most noble act in his long and memorable reign, by finally abolishing once and for all the last remaining traces of slavery in his Kingdom.

3. The Law of Inheritance, issued by King Prasat T'ong in A.D. 1635, is still in force at the present time. This Law professes to be based on the Dhammathat, but in fact it is a great improvement on Manu's hoary and anachronistic code. It is interesting to note that King Prasat T'ong's Law provided for the making of Wills. Moreover, a Will is not spoken of as something new, but appears to have been, even before 1635, a recognised legal instrument in Siam. Burmese Buddhists, even in the present year of grace, are still precluded from making Wills.

The provisions of the Siamese Law as to the witnessing of a Will are most interesting, and in the opinion of the author are superior to the English Law on the subject. The witnesses must be respectable persons, their number

varying according to the rank of the Testator. Moreover, they are not, as in England, merely witnesses to the signature of the Will, but also to its contents, and to the competence of the Testator. These provisions render it difficult for a man to make a hasty or eccentric Will, since it may not be easy to find the requisite number of respectable persons to witness it. It is thus practically impossible for a Siamese, on his death-bed, to disinherit his wife and children and leave his money to a home for lost dogs.

4. The Law of Debt, which came into force in A.D. 1648, is another ingenious piece of legislation. This Law sets forth very clearly the respective liability of wives and husbands, parents and children, and brothers and sisters for one another's debts.

A curious provision of the Law of Debt is that a person who denies before a Court of Law liability for his debt, but is proved in fact to be liable, may be made to pay double "so as to keep him from getting into the way of denying his debts." Similarly, an unsuccessful Plaintiff may be mulcted in twice the amount of his claim, so as to teach him not to bring false claims. These provisions are not enforced at the present day. In former times, one must suppose that none but litigants with cast iron cases ever ventured into Court.

The Law of Debt was ill adapted to modern requirements; it was superseded by the new Civil Code introduced in 1926.

5. The most curious specimen of King Prasat T'ong's legislative efforts has been kept to the last. This is his addition to the Law of Offences against the Government of A.D. 1351. It was issued in 1657 (probably after the King had had a particularly trying time with van Vliet) and runs as follows: "If any subjects of the Realm,

Tai or Mohn, male or female, fearless of the Royal displeasure and Laws, and seeing the wealth and prosperity of merchants from foreign lands, shall give their daughters or granddaughters to be the wives of foreigners, English or Dutch, Japanese or Malays, followers of other religions, and allow them to become converted to foreign religions, those persons are held to be thorns in the side of the State and enemies of the Realm. They may be punished by confiscation of their property, imprisonment for life, degradation, being made to cut grass for the Royal elephants, or fines of various grades. This is for an example to others. Why is this? Because the (foreign) father will sow seed and beget future progeny, and the father and son will report the affairs of the Realm in foreign lands, and when they became known, foreigners will assail the Realm on every side, and the Buddhist religion will decline and fall into disrepute."

Dutch writers refer more than once to preparations made by King Prasat T'ong, during his reign, to subdue Cambodia, which, as has been seen, had been more or less independent since 1618. No record can be found of an invasion of Cambodia having been actually undertaken during this reign, but there is some reason to suppose that the show of force was sufficient, and that Cambodia renewed her allegiance to Siam. It was probably to celebrate this event that King Prasat T'ong erected a temple on the road from Ayut'ia to P'rabat, the design of which was copied from the celebrated Angkor T'om temple in Cambodia.

King Prasat T'ong died on the 8th of August, 1656. It seems strange that this man, who had obtained the throne of Siam through intrigue and murder, and had retained it by methods of terrorism, was allowed to die quietly in his bed. Not only this, but he even seems to



have been regarded by some contemporary and later writers with a certain degree of admiration. Van Schouten speaks of him as "ruling with great reputation and honour," and the compilers of the Siamese *P'ongsawadan* apparently had rather a high opinion of him. He was evidently one of those successful upstarts who succeed, by sheer force of audacity, in impressing upon others a false opinion of their merits. If there was anything really great about the man, it certainly is not evident in the accounts of contemporary observers.

## CHAPTER XIII

### REIGNS OF KING JAI, KING SRI SUT'AMMARAJA, AND KING NARAI

On the death of King Prasat T'ong, his eldest son, Chao Fa Jai, seized' the throne, though it would appear that the late King's younger brother had been appointed Uparat. Chao Fa Jai, however, only reigned for a few days. His younger brother, Prince Narai, joined the party of his uncle, and he was captured and executed.

Prince Sri Sut'ammaraaja, younger brother of King Prasat T'ong, now became King, and Prince Narai was made Uparat.

From the little we know about King Sri Sut'ammaraaja, we may conclude that he was as villainous a character as his brother. Fortunately for Siam, he reigned for less than three months. In November 1657 he became enamoured of his niece, the sister of Prince Narai, and made overtures to her which she resented. She was smuggled out of the palace hidden in a book-case,<sup>1</sup> and went to complain to her brother of the unseemly treatment to which she had been subjected. Prince Narai decided to dethrone his uncle. Calling his followers round him, he attacked the palace. The

<sup>1</sup> The *P'ongsawadan* states that he was appointed King by his father. The Council of Dutch East India Company at Batavia, writing in the following January, said that he "with armed men seized the Court."

<sup>2</sup> One of the large square cupboards in which religious books are kept.

King was wounded in the back, but managed to escape. He was captured, and a few days later was executed.<sup>1</sup>

The new King was aged about twenty-five at the time of his accession. The violent deaths of two monarchs within three months had unsettled the country, and we may suppose that King Narai did not feel, at first, very secure upon his throne. He had, indeed, not been King for long when two of his younger brothers were accused of plotting against his life. They were both executed, and for some time executions of suspects were the order of the day.

In 1659 the Kingdom of Cambodia was disturbed by civil war between the young King, Keo Fa, and his brother, Nak Pratum. The Queen-mother, a Cochin-Chinese Princess, asked for the intervention of the King of Cochin-China. A Cochin-Chinese army then overran and plundered the Kingdom. The King was captured, and died in Cochin-China, and Nak Pratum became King. Among the victims of this invasion were several Englishmen, employed in the East India Company's factory in Cambodia. The factory was looted, and they narrowly escaped with their lives. They fled to Siam, where King Narai treated them with great kindness and generosity. They sent a flowery account of the country to the Council at Batavia, and urged the re-establishment of a factory at Ayut'ia. By 1661 the East India Company once more possessed an establishment in Siam. The King forgave them an old debt, still owing, and their factors returned once more to "ye olde factory house,"

<sup>1</sup> According to Turpin, King Sri Sut'ammaraaja was stabbed to death by a Portuguese, of whom there were 1,000 on the side of King Narai. Siamese history says that King Narai was assisted by his Japanese body-guard, one of whom shot at and wounded King Sri Sut'ammaraaja. The Council of the East India Company at Batavia, writing only two months after these events, said that Prince Narai "took up arms and deprived his uncle first of the throne, and then, a few days later, of his life."

abandoned in 1622. Thomas Cotes was placed in charge.

Burma was at this time in a very disturbed state, owing to difficulties with China. The Ming dynasty had been overthrown, and the last Ming Emperor died in 1643. His son, Yunhli, after maintaining himself for some years as a kind of robber chieftain on the frontiers of Yunnan and the Shan States, was driven in 1658 to seek a refuge in Burma. As a consequence of this, the next year a large Chinese force invaded Burma and besieged Ava.<sup>1</sup>

These events were not without their effect upon the politics of Siam. P'ra Sen-Müang, the Prince of Chieng-mai, became panic-stricken on hearing of the Chinese invasion of Burma, and fearing that his turn would come next, sent an envoy with a letter to King Narai imploring the protection of Siam. King Narai eagerly welcomed the opportunity of reuniting Chiengmai and Ayut'ia, and in November 1660 marched northwards at the head of a considerable army.

In the meantime, the Prince of Chiengmai received tidings that the Chinese had run short of supplies and had retired from Ava. Thinking that, in his haste, he had laid himself open to the vengeance of the King of Burma, he secretly ordered all his officers and men who were with the Siamese army to return at once to Chieng-mai. King Narai, seeing that the Prince of Chiengmai was playing him false, proceeded on his march, and occupied Nak'on Lampang and several smaller towns in the Chiengmai dominions. His force, however, was too weak to deal with a hostile Chiengmai. He therefore returned to Ayut'ia early in 1661.

<sup>1</sup> The King of Burma at this time was Bintalé, son of T'ado Maha T'amaraja. He succeeded in 1648.

In the same year King Bintalé of Burma was overthrown and executed. He had caused great misery by conniving at "profiteering" in food by his wives and courtiers during the siege of Ava. His brother, the Prince of Prome, became King, assuming the title of Maha Pawara T'ammaraaja.<sup>1</sup>

These events in Burma greatly encouraged King Narai in his design of subduing Chiengmai. He was by no means satisfied with the performance of his Generals on the first expedition, and determined to place a younger and more energetic man in charge of his armies. His choice fell on his foster brother, P'ya Kosa T'ibodi K'un Lek. P'ya Kosa, on assuming command, horrified all the old hands by his merciless severity. He had realised that what was wanting in the Siamese army was strict discipline and obedience. Deserters and slackers got short shrift from him, and he saw to it that his orders were obeyed. On one occasion he gave instructions for the building of a stockade with the narrow ends of the bamboo buried in the earth. A certain officer, observing that this was contrary to the usual method of putting the big ends downwards, assumed that the General had made a mistake, which he took upon himself to set right. He paid for this offence with his head.

P'ya Kosa was, of course, quite right, and readers who have tried to induce country folk in Siam to do a job on a new system will have every sympathy with him.

At the end of 1661 P'ya Kosa left Ayut'ia for Chiengmai with his army, followed not long afterwards by the King. In all about 100,000 men were engaged on this expedition, a far larger army than had ever before been put into the field for an invasion of Chiengmai. No serious

<sup>1</sup> Pye, in Harvey's *History of Burma*.

resistance was met with until Nak'on Lampang was reached. That city fell after a short engagement. Lampun held out for a week. Chiengmai put up a stout resistance, but was taken after the arrival of King Narai in March 1662. The Prince and most of the nobles were captured.

After the fall of Chiengmai a Burmese army appeared on the scene, but was attacked by the Siamese and driven back to Burma.

King Narai remained for fifteen days at Chiengmai. He then returned to Ayut'ia with a vast amount of booty, including the famous image of Buddha called the P'rasingh, which had formerly been at Ayut'ia.'

While the Siamese were invading Chiengmai, a serious rebellion broke out in Pegu. The Peguans had shown evident signs of disaffection during the siege of Ava by the Chinese. After the danger was over, the new King of Burma made ready to chastise them. They revolted, seized the Governor of Martaban and sent him to Ayut'ia with envoys to beg King Narai to take Pegu under his protection and to defend them against the King of Burma. At the same time large numbers of Peguans emigrated from their country and settled in Siam.

King Narai, seeing that these proceedings could only result in war, assembled strong forces at all the principal points on the frontier of Burma. Towards the end of 1662 the expected attack was made, but the Siamese were ready, and drove the Burmese back with heavy losses. Encouraged by this victory to pursue a still more adventurous policy, King Narai now advanced into Pegu. The whole population, wearied of Burmese oppression, rose in his favour. Martaban, Rangoon and other strongholds were quickly occupied, and the Siamese army then marched northwards. How far they got is a matter as

' See note to p. 74

to which the most diverse evidence exists. In the end, however, they were forced, owing to shortage of supplies and the existence of a famine in Burma, to retire back to Siam.<sup>1</sup>

This was the last important invasion of Burmese territory by a Siamese army. The results were of no lasting importance. Pegu fell back almost at once under Burmese rule, but a less harsh policy was adopted towards the Peguans, lest they might again appeal to Siam for aid.

As for Chiengmai, King Narai seems to have made no attempt to maintain his ascendancy there. In 1663 P'ya Sen Müang died and the Burmese Prince of Prome was appointed to govern Chiengmai, which remained under the rule of Burmese Princes until 1727.

It must be admitted that King Narai's wars were quite devoid of any useful results.

The re-establishment of an English factory at Ayut'ia was very displeasing to the Dutch, who had had almost the whole trade of Siam in their hands for about forty years. Moreover, the system of Royal monopolies, instituted by King Songt'am and consolidated by King Prasat T'ong, whereby the King controlled the principal articles of commerce, such as hides, tin and timber, did not suit them at all. Early in 1664 they demanded various special commercial privileges, and on failing to obtain these, they sent a fleet, which blockaded the mouth

<sup>1</sup> It seems impossible to find out the truth about these events. Siamese history says that the Siamese besieged Ava. Burmese history makes out that the Siamese never got beyond Pegu, where they were defeated and driven back to Siam, King Narai's son, P'ya Win, being killed. King Narai was at that time twenty-nine years old, so certainly had no son of military age. The history of Pegu (Siamese translation) says that the Siamese reached Pagan, but this translation bears signs of having been touched up to make it agree with the Siamese version.

The date is given in Burmese history as 1663 (May), but the Dutch Governor-General at Batavia, writing on December 15th, 1662, says: "The King has subjugated many districts and strong towns, among others the Principality of Martavan, and will probably march on . . . to subdue the royal city Ava." This definitely fixes the Siamese invasion of Pegu as having taken place in the latter half of 1662.

of the Menam River for a considerable time. Siam had then no fleet capable of trying conclusions with the Dutch. Their demands were therefore granted, and on August 10th (22nd N.S.), 1664, a Treaty was signed whereby the Dutch obtained the sole monopoly of the trade in hides, and Siam undertook not to employ any Chinese on her ships. The term Chinese was defined as including Japanese and Cochin-Chinese. As most of the sailors on Siamese ships fell within this definition, this clause rendered it impossible for Siam to compete with Holland in the China trade.

But the most interesting provision of this Treaty is the following: "In case (which God forbid) any of the Company's residents should commit a serious crime in Siam, the King and the Judges shall not have the right to judge him, but he must be handed over to the Company's Chief, to be punished according to the Netherlands laws."

Here we have the germ of the system of extra-territorial jurisdiction, which has occupied so prominent a place in the politics of modern Siam.

King Narai, hoping to curb the arrogance of the Dutch, began to think of cultivating the friendship of other European Powers. The British East India Company were disinclined to interfere in Siamese affairs; there was even a good deal of discussion as to the desirability of closing the factory at Ayut'ia, which was less profitable than had been expected. Portugal was no longer formidable. There remained France. In 1662 Monsignor de la Motte Lambert, Bishop of Bécrythe, had arrived in Siam. He was followed in 1664 by Monsignor Pallu, Bishop of Heliopolis, and other French Jesuit missionaries. The King paid great attention to these French missionaries, particularly when he learned that one of their



number, Father Thomas,' was a skilful architect and engineer. Father Thomas designed and superintended the construction of new forts at Bangkok, Ayut'ia, Nontaburi, and other places, designed primarily against Dutch aggression. The King, thinking that Ayut'ia was too easily accessible from the sea, moved his residence to Lopburi, where a new palace, forts, and other buildings were put up, likewise with the help of Father Thomas. A tower was also built at Ayut'ia, to be used as an observatory.

The French missionaries were given land and houses and were encouraged to build churches. The great favours thus showered on them by King Narai misled them into supposing that he had a personal leaning towards the Catholic faith, and they began to form the design of converting him, and through him the whole Kingdom.

In 1665 the Bishop of Heliopolis returned to Europe. He regaled the Pope, Alexander VII, and King Louis XIV of France, with wonderful accounts of the advance of the faith in Siam. The Pope promised to take steps to push forward the good work, and Louis sent several architects and craftsmen to assist Father Thomas with his more worldly tasks.

The Bishop of B rythe and his followers had their first personal interview with King Narai about the time of the departure of Bishop Pallu for Europe. They seized the opportunity of expounding to His Majesty the principles of Christianity. He appeared to be impressed, and their hopes of success were raised by further grants of land.

A couple of years elapsed, during which a good many converts were gained, but the King remained a Buddhist. In 1668 Mohammedan missionaries arrived from Acheen,

/ Father Thomas Valguarnera, an Italian.

a State which had for long been in friendly communication with Siam, and urged King Narai to embrace the tenets of Islam. The French missionaries were greatly perturbed, but the King was not much impressed by the merits of Mohammedanism, and at a later date stated that if he were ever to change his religion he would certainly never become a Mohammedan. It is worthy of note that though Christianity has never made a very general appeal to the Siamese, particularly the upper classes, Mohammedanism has attracted them even less.

In February 1669 Monsieur des Bourges, Secretary to the Bishop of Bérÿthe, who had returned to France in 1663, appeared again in Siam, accompanied by six more priests, and bearing a Bull from the new Pope, Clement IX, whereby Siam and some of the neighbouring States were placed under the jurisdiction of the Church at Ayut'ia, thus recognising French ecclesiastical ascendancy in Indo-China. Monsignor Lanneau was later (1664) consecrated Bishop of Metalopolis, to reside in Siam, with power to establish missions throughout the East, with the exception of the possessions of Spain and Portugal.

By 1676 there was a Catholic seminary at Ayut'ia, attended by over a hundred pupils. Siamese youths were being prepared for holy orders, and a female community, known as *Votaries of the Cross*, was established. No means were neglected of gaining adherents for the Church of Rome.

On May 27th, 1673, the Bishop of Heliopolis returned to Ayut'ia, after a long and very adventurous journey. He bore with him letters from Pope Clement IX and King Louis XIV to King Narai. The Siamese monarch was anxious to receive the letters in solemn public audience. The Bishops stipulated that they must

be received in a manner becoming to their dignity, and must be spared the humiliation of appearing in their stockinged soles and prostrating themselves before His Majesty. After some delay these conditions were accepted, and the Siamese nobles were scandalised by the sight of the Bishop and priests remaining seated at a royal audience. The letters were duly presented, but certain valuable presents, sent by the Pope and the French King, had perforce been left behind at Bantam.

Not long afterwards, the Bishops were conducted in almost Royal state to Lopburi, and were given a private grant of land for the mission; the King further promised to build them a fine church at his own expense.

The presents from the Pope and the French King never arrived. A Siamese vessel was sent to bring them from Bantam, but the vessel, with its cargo, was captured by the Dutch after it had left that port.

The year 1675 was a memorable one, for in that year the *Phoenix*, a ship belonging to Captain George White, arrived at Ayut'ia. Captain White's factor was none other than the celebrated Constant or Constantine Phaulkon,<sup>1</sup> whose romantic and dazzling career in Siam has been so often related.

Phaulkon was born in the Greek Island of Cephalonia, about the year 1650. His father was a small inn-keeper named Yeraki (meaning a falcon). Young Yeraki ran away from home when about ten years old, and joined an English ship. He lived in London until about 1669, when he went to sea again as Captain White's cabin-boy. He had anglicised his name to Falcon, and his shipmates re-hellenised it again to Phaulkon. He rose to be mate of a ship belonging to the East India Company which, in 1678, brought Captain Richard

<sup>1</sup> Phaulkon himself invariably signed his name as "Constant Phaulkon."

Burnaby to Siam, and when first in the country was used by Captains White and Burnaby in their trading operations at Singora. In 1680 he joined the service of P'ya Kosa T'ibodi, who had then lately become P'rak'lang, and before long was promoted to be Superintendant of Foreign Trade, with the title of Luang Wijaiyen.<sup>1</sup>

The appointment of Phaulkon to this position did not at all suit the East India Company. The one thing which they regarded with special hatred and detestation was what they called an "interloper," meaning thereby an English trader who carried on business in the Far East independently of the Company. Captain George White and his brother Samuel were noted "interlopers." Phaulkon had perhaps imbibed from the Whites sentiments none too friendly to the East India Company, and to the end of his career he paid no attention to the Company's claims to monopolise the English trade in Siam, but encouraged many of the detested "interlopers" to come and do business at Ayut'ia.

Phaulkon's policy of encouraging "interlopers" led to constant ill-feeling between him and the servants of the East India Company, and this tended, as time went on, to throw him more and more into the arms of the French.

<sup>1</sup> A curious story is related by Tachard, Turpin and other writers, to the effect that Phaulkon, after first settling in Siam, bought a ship called the *Mary*, which was wrecked off the Maiabar coast; there Phaulkon fell in with another castaway, who turned out to be a Siamese Ambassador to Persia. Phaulkon assisted the Ambassador and they returned to Siam together, where the Ambassador introduced the Greek to the P'rak'lang. This story contains several romantic details, and its truth was denied by Phaulkon himself, who stated that after his first arrival in Siam he never left the confines of the Kingdom. However this may be, a sloop called the *Mary* was actually wrecked off Sumatra in 1679. Captain Burnaby was part owner of this vessel, and Gosfright and Ivatt, the East India Company's Agents at Ayut'ia, have recorded that Phaulkon was the Captain of it.

In 1674 the Bishop of Heliopolis had left Siam, but several new priests arrived in 1676. In 1676 M. Cherboneau, the first Medical Missionary to Siam, arrived. He was installed in a hospital established by the King, but was before long persuaded to accept the Governorship of the island of Puket. This appointment was, without doubt, inspired by the French missionaries, and marks the first step in their design to gain for their country complete political control over Siam. A few years later, M. Cherboneau was succeeded at Puket by another Frenchman, M. Billi.

In 1679 the worthy Bishop of Bérÿthe died, and after his death the political side of the activities of the French missionaries became more evident.

Colbert, the famous Minister of Louis XIV, had in 1664 granted a charter to a Company called the "*Compagnie Royale des Indes Orientales*," which was intended to rival the English Company, and which had been established at Surat since 1668. In 1680 this French Company sent a vessel to Ayut'ia, with a number of officers, to start a factory there. The King received them well and granted them all kinds of privileges.

On Christmas Day 1680 the first Siamese embassy to Europe left Ayut'ia. There were three ambassadors, all of high rank, with thirty followers. They took with them a letter to the King of France, written on a sheet of gold, together with many rare and curious presents, including young elephants and rhinoceroses. The letter offered to cede Singora to France. Singora, as has been seen, had been in a state of rebellion at the time of the death of King Prasat T'ong, and it would seem as though it was still unsubdued in 1680.

The ship bearing this embassy, which must have been a regular Noah's Ark, never reached Europe. It got

as far as the east coast of Madagascar, where it was wrecked, and all the passengers, humans and animals alike, went to the bottom of the sea.

While showering favours upon the French, King Narai was not badly disposed towards the English. The latter had not, however, the advantage of possessing a force of missionaries, and King Charles II was not a man to whom the prospect of ousting French influence in a far distant land was likely to appeal. It appears, however, that in 1678 King Narai offered to cede Patani to the East India Company, with the same privileges as they enjoyed at Fort St. George. Samuel Potts, one of the Company's factors, actually went to Patani, but finding it in a state of rebellion, he went on to Singora.

With regard to these rebellions of Patani and Singora, it is difficult to trace very clearly what happened. Patani appears to have submitted to Siam in 1679, but Singora, which had been more or less in a state of rebellion for over twenty years, was reported by Potts, in January 1679, to be preparing for a siege. According to Dutch reports, Potts assisted the rebellious Governor of Singora to put up earthworks against the Siamese, which brought the East India Company into great disfavour. In March 1679 Singora was still holding out, but was probably subdued during that year. La Loubère states that the siege came to an end in a curious manner. A Frenchman, named Cyprien, tired of the dilatory methods of the Siamese General, crept into Singora by night, captured the Governor, and brought him, single-handed, into the Siamese camp.

Potts returned to Ayut'ia after the fall of Singora, and began to indulge in a series of quarrels with Richard Burnaby, who had been in charge of the British factory there since 1678. Burnaby was dismissed in 1681, and

Potts and Thomas Ivatt became joint chiefs of the factory. Burnaby had let Phaulkon run up a big debt. Potts demanded payment, and commenced a most violent correspondence with Phaulkon, whom he called ungrateful and impudent, and whose replies he stigmatised as "nonsensical stuff." Ivatt took Phaulkon's side and was dismissed. He followed Burnaby into the Siamese Service. On the night of December 6th, 1682, the house and factory of the East India Company were utterly destroyed by fire. Potts accused Phaulkon of having caused the fire in order to destroy the evidence of his debt. Phaulkon alleged that Potts himself had burnt the factory down, so as to conceal the defalcations of which he had been guilty.

These disputes only served to make Phaulkon more and more pro-French. At about this time he was converted to the Roman faith, and from now on became more or less definitely a supporter of French interests.

In 1683 William Strangh and Thomas Yale were sent from England to investigate the Company's affairs in Siam. They were well received by the new P'rak'lang, P'ya Srit'ammarat, the successor of Chao P'ya Kosa T'ibodi,<sup>1</sup> who had died early in that year. Strangh and Yale did more harm than good. They collected none of the debts due, and failed to elicit the truth about the loss of the factory. Yale was more or less reasonable, but Strangh had the most violent quarrels with Phaulkon who had now become Chao P'ya Wijayen, and left in a fury at the end of the same year. Strangh wrote Phaulkon a parting letter, in which he spoke of "your impolite weak understanding, jumbled by your sudden and surprising elevation to a sovereign Lordship or a

<sup>1</sup> He had been made a Chao P'ya several years previously.

heathenish Grace," and accused him of firing the factory and of being at the bottom of all the Company's troubles and losses at Ayut'ia. Not very diplomatic.

Phaulkon, whom Strangh saw fit to insult so grossly, was now one of the most powerful men in Siam. The new P'rak'lang, to quote Phaulkon himself, was a "fool," and the Greek was to all intents and purposes the P'ra-K'lang. Whilst Strangh was irritating this dangerous enemy, King Narai was arranging to make fresh overtures to France. In January 1684 the second Siamese embassy set sail for Europe. This embassy was headed by two Siamese, and accompanied by a French priest. They landed first in England, at Margate, and it is said that a Treaty was concluded by them with Charles II, but no trace of it has been found. They then went on to France, where they were well received. The members of this mission were, however, men of inferior rank, and their behaviour did not make a good impression in Europe.

These Siamese ambassadors, who had doubtless been informed that Christians were monogamous, must have been rather puzzled by what they saw at the Courts of Charles II and Louis XIV.

Relations between Phaulkon and the East India Company did not improve. Not long after the departure of the second Siamese embassy to Europe, Phaulkon seized and imprisoned Peter Crouch and John Thomas, the Company's factors, on their ship the *Delight*, for refusing to deliver to him a quantity of nails consigned to Japan. The East India Company had by this time decided that the trade of Siam caused more trouble than it was worth, and that Phaulkon was a "naughty man" and a "wicked fellow." However, in 1685 the Council at Fort St. George sent a Commercial Mission



to Ayut'ia to make a final attempt to set matters on a more satisfactory footing. This mission arrived at Ayut'ia in September 1685. The first sight that met their eyes was two French men-of-war, which had just arrived, conveying the first embassy of Louis XIV to Siam. The English mission was more or less ignored, and seems to have been entirely without results.

The French embassy was equipped on a most magnificent scale. At its head was the Chevalier de Chaumont, and he was accompanied by a numerous suite, in which the Jesuit element largely predominated. The principal task set by King Louis for the Chevalier de Chaumont was the conversion of King Narai to Christianity, and the Abbé Choisy, who accompanied him, was instructed to remain behind to baptise the King in the event of his conversion.

The French embassy obtained, by virtue of a convention signed on December 19th, 1685, very important religious and commercial concessions. The French East India Company gained complete liberty of commerce, with the exception of import and export duties, and with the important restriction that all goods had to be bought from the Royal warehouses. The manager of the Company was given extra-territorial jurisdiction over their servants. The Company further obtained a monopoly of the tin in the island of Puket, and Singora was ceded to them, with full power to fortify it.

In return, what did Siam gain? Nothing at all! There must, however, have been a tacit understanding that France was to assist, if necessary, against the Dutch, whose steadily increasing influence in the Peninsula was regarded by King Narai with some misgiving.

The Chevalier de Chaumont, however, failed in what was regarded as the main object of his mission, namely

the conversion of the King. Poor King Narai must have had a very trying time of it, for not only was he being pestered by de Chaumont and the Jesuits to become a Catholic, but there was at the same time a Persian ambassador at his Court, who lost no opportunity of impressing upon His Majesty the virtues of the Koran.

In the end, de Chaumont asked for a definite reply, and the King is then supposed to have made a speech which has since become famous, in the course of which he said: "It is natural to believe that the True God takes as much pleasure in being worshipped in different ways as by being glorified by a vast number of creatures who praise Him after one fashion. We admire the beauty and variety of natural things. Are that beauty and that variety less to be admired in the supernatural sphere, or are they less worthy of God's wisdom? However, as we know that God is the supreme Ruler of the world, and believe that nothing can be done against His will, I resign my person and my realm to His mercy and His Divine Providence, and I implore Him, in His eternal wisdom, so to dispose of them as shall seem best to Him." "

While the French embassy was being fêted at Lopburi, relations between Siam and the East India Company were becoming less and less friendly. The King of Siam had a claim against the King of Golconda, and an Englishman in the Siamese service, Captain John Coates, was sent, in command of a Siamese ship called the *Prosperous*, to enforce a settlement. Coates seized several ships belonging to the King of Golconda, captured a fort, and committed other hostile acts. There was a

↑ Turpin says that the arguments between the King and de Chaumont never really got beyond Phaulkon, who acted as interpreter. It is just possible that the King never knew that he was being asked to change his religion, and that his eloquent speech was the work of Phaulkon.

factory of the East India Company at Madapollam, in Golconda territory, and the chief and governor of the factory were blamed by the King of Golconda for the actions of Coates, an Englishman, though, as a matter of fact, they had done their best to hinder him.

The proceedings of Coates, and of another Englishman in the Siamese service, Alexander Leslie, were denounced by the East India Company as piratical, and the relations between the Company and the Government of Siam became extremely strained.

French influence, on the other hand, gained in strength every day. The Chevalier de Chaumont and his Mission left Siam on the 22nd of December, 1685, taking with them the members of King 'Narai's third embassy to France. This embassy was headed by P'ra Wisut Sunt'orn (Nai Fan), a younger brother of Chao P'ya Kosa T'ibodi, the deceased P'rak'laug. P'ra Wisut was an able and intelligent man. He and his colleagues created a very good impression on King Louis, the more so as they had come to ask, as a favour, for something which he was only too ready to grant, namely French troops to garrison some of the forts in Siam.

During the early part of 1686 the war between Siam and Golconda continued, and was the cause of so many incidents to which the East India Company took exception that finally they determined to make war on Siam. They had been trying since 1684 to get the permission of James II to declare war, but James was reluctant to sanction a course which might lead to trouble with France. On March 21st. 1685 he wrote a personal letter to Phaulkon, in which he addressed him as "Our well-beloved friend," and informed him that certain presents sent by him to the late King Charles II had been well received, thanked him for his kindness to English subjects,

and assured him of "our friendship upon all occasions which may offer." This letter was delivered in August 1686, by Captain Henry Udall, Commander of the English ship *Herbert*.

Captain Udall never left Siam. While he was at Ayut'ia, a serious rebellion was raised by the natives of Macassar, who had a large settlement in the capital. They were only subdued after several very severe engagements. During the final action Captain Coates was drowned in a marsh, and Captain Udall fell, fighting bravely. Four Frenchmen were also killed. Phaulkon, who was no coward, also took a personal part in this action, and would have lost his life had not a "strong black Cafer flung him into the river and swam with him to a boat." In the end, the Macassars were subdued, but not till most of them were dead. Those who were captured were buried alive.

The East India Company had fully determined on war against Siam, or rather, one might almost say, against Phaulkon, the "naughty fellow" whom they blamed for all their misfortunes. Their principal aims were threefold: to capture and hold the port of Mergui; to capture as many Siamese ships as possible; to arrest and court-martial every Englishman in the Siamese service. A certain Captain Lake, who was sent to Ayut'ia, more or less as a spy, was foolish enough to boast of these warlike designs of the Company. He was consequently arrested on his ship, the *Prudent Mary*, by Count de Forbin, the French Commandant of the fort of Bangkok, and imprisoned at Lopburi, where he died in 1687.

Mergui was at that time governed by two Englishmen, Richard Burnaby, the former Chief of the Company's factory at Ayut'ia, and Samuel White, brother of George

White, Phaulkon's early patron. Burnaby, who bore the title of P'ra Marit, was Governor, and White was Shahbander, or Port Officer. A personal letter from James II was obtained, ordering Burnaby and White to betray their trust by handing over Mergui to the Company's men-of-war. James was never too proud to ask any of his subjects to do a dirty action.

On the 28th of April, 1687, the Company forwarded to the King of Siam a detailed claim of £65,000, for damage suffered by British subjects as a result of the war between Siam and Golconda, and also for advances made to the Persian ambassador to Siam. The claim was accompanied by a very friendly letter to the King, coupled, however, with a threat to take any of His Majesty's subjects and ships by way of reprisals, and to blockade the port of Mergui until full satisfaction was given.

The letter was not delivered until after the arrival at Mergui of two English frigates, the *Curtana* and the *James*. Captain Anthony Weltden, of the *Curtana*, landed, and a proclamation by King James II was read, ordering all Englishmen in the Siamese service to leave at once. The Englishmen at Mergui, numbering at least fifty, prepared to obey, and a truce for sixty days was proclaimed, to allow of the letter to King Narai being sent to Ayut'ia. After the proclamation of the truce some preparations were, very naturally, made to defend the port. Weltden objected to this, and on July 9th he caused some piles, which had been driven into the river bed, to be taken out, and on the same day seized Captain White's ship, the *Resolution*, which was sailing under the Siamese flag.

On the night of the 14th. of July the Siamese Governor of Mergui, exasperated by the proceedings of Captain

Weltden, and fearing that all the Englishmen at Mergui were about to make common cause with their compatriots, suddenly opened fire on the *James*, and succeeded in sinking her. During the same night an attempt was made to massacre every Englishman in Mergui. Weltden, who was ashore, had a narrow escape, being left for dead. White got away, but Burnaby fell a victim, together with about fifty other Englishmen.

This incident, it must be admitted, was not very creditable either to the English or the Siamese.

Weltden retired, and not long after he had left, another English ship, the *Pearl*, arrived at Mergui, having on board William Hodges and John Hill, who had been appointed to administer Mergui after its expected capture. They found a French Governor and some French troops stationed at Mergui, and were reluctantly forced by the French and Siamese to proceed to Lopburi. They were at first imprisoned, together with many other Englishmen, but were later released by the King, who does not seem to have been at all anxious for war, and hoped to use them as intermediaries for arranging a peace. They remained in Siam for almost two years.

On August 11th, 1687, King Narai issued a declaration of war against the East India Company. In it he accused White and Burnaby of treacherously assisting Weltden, and threw on Weltden the sole responsibility for the massacre at Mergui. His Majesty carefully explained that he did not consider himself to be at war with the English Government. Many Englishmen, unconnected with the East India Company, remained in Siam, and do not appear to have been badly treated.

The King was at that time preparing to receive the second embassy of Louis XIV, which arrived at Ayut'ia

on September 27th, 1687. This embassy was far more imposing than that of de Chaumont. The envoys, de la Loubère and Céberet, were accompanied by three men-of-war and four other ships, conveying 600 French soldiers and 300 artificers commanded by Monsieur Des Farges, a General of France. The religious and commercial elements were also fully represented.

It is not clear whether King Narai expected so large a force, but his difficulties with the East India Company made him more disposed to welcome them than might otherwise have been the case. To us, at the present day, it seems like an act of madness on his part to admit so many foreign troops into his Kingdom. It was not, however, until after the world had beheld with amazement the exploits of Dupleix and Clive in India that it was understood with what comparative ease a clever and capable man, backed by a few well-disciplined European troops, could overcome an Oriental Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> In 1687 the idea that France could do any serious harm to Siam with 600 men would probably have appeared grotesque to King Narai. A hundred years later the feat would have seemed for more possible.

The French envoys brought with them a French patent of nobility for Phaulkon. He became a Count and a Knight of the Order of St. Michael and St. Peter. Many valuable gifts were also sent to him by King Louis and Pope Innocent XI.

The French troops were not, wisely, all kept together. They were sent to man various forts, for instance, Bangkok, and, as we have seen, Mergui.

<sup>1</sup> These remarks, it need hardly be said, are not intended to apply to present-day conditions in countries such as Japan and Siam, which have modernised their systems of defence.

On December 1st, 1687, a new Treaty was signed, granting even greater privileges to the French East India Company than that of 1685.

Oébert left Ayut'ia immediately after the Treaty was signed, and La Loubère in January 1688, taking with him the fourth Siamese embassy to Europe.<sup>1</sup> The French troops remained, and seem to have had a most wretched time. Many of the soldiers died of fever, and the survivors made themselves very unpopular by their insolence; in particular, they paid far more attention to the fair sex than was thought at all becoming.

A strong anti-foreign party had by this time sprung up and had gained general popular support. The King's policy was distasteful both to the nobility and to the common people. The whole realm was filled with Europeans, the forts were garrisoned by foreign troops. The most powerful Minister was a Greek. To add to their troubles the country was at war with the East India Company, a war for which Phaulkon was supposed to be responsible.

Moreover, the religious prejudices of the people were aroused. Catholic priests were in high favour and held valuable privileges. The King was suspected of Christian tendencies. He had no son, but had adopted a young man named Mom Pi<sup>2</sup> whom he hoped to make his successor. Mom Pi was a Catholic. Phaulkon did all he could to encourage the spread of Catholicism, and became daily more and more unpopular.

At the head of the anti-foreign party, if it can be so called, was P'ra P'etrāja, a General who was in command of the elephants, and who had greatly distinguished

<sup>1</sup> This embassy never got beyond the Cape of Good Hope. The envoys took with them no elephants, rhinoceroses and other animals as presents for the French King. All the animals died before reaching the Cape.

<sup>2</sup> According to some contemporary writers, Mom Pi was commonly supposed to be a natural son of King Narai. He was betrothed to King Narai's daughter.



himself in the Burmese war and won more laurels in a later expedition against Cambodia.<sup>1</sup> P'ra P'etraja was a man of humble origin.<sup>2</sup> He had, however, always been a favourite with King Narai.. They had always been together, for P'ra P'etraja, like P'ya Kosa, was one of the King's foster-brothers.

P'ra P'etraja was a man of small stature, but he was known to be brave and energetic. He had a commanding presence, and was well fitted to take command of the popular party. He hated Phaulkon, and his son, Nai Dūa, who had recently been appointed Luang Sarasak, a violent and aggressive young man, is said to have on one occasion assaulted the Greek and knocked out two of his teeth.

In March 1688 King Narai became seriously ill with dropsy. His symptoms were such as to render it unlikely that he would live for more than a few months. Immediately there began the usual intrigues as to the succession. The King had two brothers and a sister living. The elder of his brothers was called Chao Fa Ap'ai T'ot, and the younger is known to us by the nickname of Chao Fa Noi. Both of them were greatly out of favour. He had also a daughter, Princess Yot'a T'ep. Phaulkon had some time before advised King Narai to proclaim his daughter as his heir, but the King had refused. The Greek now urged the King to appoint his adopted son, Mom Pi, as his successor. P'ra P'etraja supported, or professed to support, the claims of Prince Ap'ai T'ot.

<sup>1</sup> This expedition to Cambodia is not mentioned in Siamese history. From the history of Cambodia we learn that King Narai invaded Cambodia in 1679 at the request of King Sri Jai Jett'a, who succeeded to the throne in 1676 and whose title was disputed by Nak Non. The latter was defeated by the Siamese and fled to Cochin-China.

<sup>2</sup> Some writers say that he was a relative of King Narai. This may be true, as King P'rasat T'ong doubtless had plenty of relatives in more or less humble positions.

The King was induced, at the request of all the leading officials, to appoint P'ra P'etraja to act as Regent during his illness. P'ra P'etraja at once assumed control over the palace guards, and as he had the army at his back he was able to do exactly as he wished.

Mom Pi was first got out of the way. He was enticed out of the King's apartments and ruthlessly murdered. This deed opened the eyes of the dying monarch to the treachery around him, but he was helpless; the reproaches with which he assailed P'ra P'etraja and Luang Sarasak were not likely to turn them from their purpose.

Phaulkon now sent to Bangkok begging Des Farges to bring up the French troops there to his assistance. Des Farges set out, but was told that the King was dead, and was persuaded to return to Bangkok.

Phaulkon was arrested on a charge of treason, and after being treated for several days with great cruelty, was executed on June 5th, 1688. He died bravely, protesting that he was innocent, and that his whole policy had been directed by three motives—the glory of God, the service of the King, and the interests of the State.

Thus ended the earthly career of one of the most remarkable of European adventurers in the East. In his short life of only forty years, Phaulkon rose, from the position of cabin-boy on a small ship, to be a Chao P'ya of Siam, a Count of France, addressed as friend by Kings and Popes, and entrusted with the destinies of a powerful Kingdom. True to his name, he soared high, and it must be admitted that he was a great man, and may have had noble aims. It has never been proved that he intended to bring Siam under French dominion, though doubtless his policy was one which might, in time, have had such a result.

Phaulkon left a widow, a Japanese by birth, and a son. The widow, after many vicissitudes, became superintendent of the kitchen to King T'ai Sra, and was still living in 1717. The son died young, leaving several children. It is on record that Phaulkon's grandson, John Phaulkon, and one of his granddaughters, were among the prisoners taken by the Burmese on the capture of Ayut'ia in 1767. They returned to Siam, and were still living in 1771. It is more than possible that there may be descendants of Phaulkon living in Siam at the present day.

After the death of Phaulkon, P'ra P'etraja, in the name of the King, ordered Des Farges to bring up his troops to Lopburi. Des Farges refused, and an attack was consequently begun against the fort at Bangkok. At the same time a persecution of the native Christians was commenced.

P'ra P'etraja had himself no desire to usurp the throne. His sole object was to get rid of Phaulkon and compel the French to leave the Kingdom. His son, Luang Sarasak, however, was more ambitious. In order to force his father's hand, he caused the King's two brothers to be arrested, and had them both executed in the usual way, by sewing them up in a velvet sack and clubbing them to death. This step rendered it impossible for P'ra P'etraja to draw back.

Two days later, on July 11th, 1688, King Narai died, and P'ra P'etraja was at once proclaimed King.<sup>1</sup>

King Narai is more familiar to us than any other of the Kings of Ayut'ia. The following description of him is adapted from Father Tachard, who met and

<sup>1</sup> According to Turpin, King Narai, before his death, caused his daughter to be proclaimed Queen.

spoke with him several times: "The King is below the average height, but very straight and well set up. His demeanour is attractive, and his manners full of gentleness and kindness. He is lively and active, and an enemy to sloth. He is always either in the forest hunting elephants, or in his palace, attending to State affairs. He is not fond of war, but when forced to take up the sword, no Eastern monarch has a stronger passion for glory."

King Narai was, without doubt, a remarkable man, and it is pitiable that such a man should have ended his days so miserably. The glamour with which his name has been surrounded by contemporary French writers must not, however, blind us to the fact that his foreign policy was a very unwise one, and must, had he lived longer, have brought his Kingdom into serious danger.

King Narai was not responsible for any great amount of legislation during his long reign. Most of the Laws attributed to him are mere Regulations as to procedure. The most interesting of his Laws is one of the Articles of the Law known as the "Law of Thirty-six Clauses." This Article, dating from the year 1687, provides for the punishment of offences similar to Champerty and Maintenance. Any man who prosecuted or defended a case under the pretence that he was a relative of one of the parties rendered himself liable to very severe penalties.

#### NOTE TO CHAPTER XIII

The order of events in connection with the death of Phaulkon and the usurpation of P'ra P'etraja is differently given by various contemporary authorities. In the version here given, compiled from several contemporary accounts, the main facts are set down in their most probable order.

## CHAPTER XIV

### REIGNS OF KING P'ETRAJA, KING P'ACHAO SUA AND KING T'AI SRA.

P'RA P'ETRAJA, on becoming King, assumed the title of Ramesuen,<sup>1</sup> but he is usually known as King P'etraja. Having got rid of all the male heirs to the throne, he proceeded to marry both the surviving female relatives of King Narai, namely his sister, Princess Yot'a T'ip, and his daughter, Princess Yot'a T'ep.<sup>2</sup>

The new King's son, Luang Sarasak, was made Maha Uparat, and all his kinsmen received high rank and titles.

The persecution of Christians was continued with great rigour. Most of the French missionaries were imprisoned and many native Christians were either killed or severely punished. It must be borne in mind, however, that this persecution was more political than religious. Catholicism was proscribed as being identified with the French. The Portuguese and Dutch do not appear to have been molested. As for the English, most of them were in gaol, as a consequence of the war with the East India Company.

The French garrison at Bangkok still held out, but the King entered into negotiations with them, as a result of which it was agreed, on September 30th, 1688, that all the French troops should leave Siam in three vessels

<sup>1</sup> He is also known by the posthumous title of Maha Burut (the Great Man).

<sup>2</sup> According to Turpin, King Narai, on his death-bed, nominated this Princess as his successor.

to be provided by the King to take them to Pondicherry.

In the following month the King was crowned with great pomp, and celebrated the event by releasing all the French and English prisoners.

The French at Mergui and at the forts in some other parts of Siam were less fortunate than their compatriots at Bangkok. Many of them were killed and many more were captured.

Des Farges and his troops, numbering about five hundred, and accompanied by about thirty-six Englishmen, left Bangkok towards the end of November, in three Siamese merchant ships and one French man-of-war. Des Farges had been made to leave behind certain Frenchmen as hostages for the return of the ships and crews. The P'rak'lang<sup>1</sup> made the mistake of releasing these hostages too soon, and Des Farges took advantage of this to detain the Siamese hostages held by him, while refusing to send back the French hostages. The Siamese considered this as breach of faith, and as a consequence all the recently liberated priests went back to gaol, and the persecution of Catholics was renewed. The Bishop of Metallopolis was treated with great cruelty, and many Frenchmen were massacred.

This second persecution, if we may call it so, was purely anti-French. The English, who had been liberated at the coronation, remained at liberty, though nominally at war with Siam, and Turpin relates that they did much to alleviate the sufferings of the French priests.

As for the Dutch, King P'etraja regarded them with special favour, and in the same month that saw the departure of the French troops, a new and very favourable Treaty was made with the Netherlands East

<sup>1</sup> This P'rak'lang was P'ya Kosa (Pa-) the former ambassador to Louis XIV

India Company, confirming the monopoly of the trade in hides, granted by King Narai, and conceding, in addition, a monopoly of the trade in tin.

Hodges and Hill, the two Englishmen who had been forcibly brought to Ayutia in 1688, remained there for some time. Hill left with the French, but Hodges remained until May 1689, when he returned to Fort St. George bearing overtures for peace from King P'etraraja. Nothing came of this, but by this time both sides had lost all interest in the war, which was only prosecuted in a desultory and half-hearted fashion.

At the end of 1689 Des Farges returned to Puket. The report was spread in Ayutia that this was a punitive expedition against Siam, and some colour was lent to the rumour by the fact that the French General was accompanied by three ships. As a result, the persecution of the French and native Christians, which had been slackening, was resumed. The unfortunate Bishop of Metallopolis, who seems always to have been the principal scapegoat, suffered many indignities, and many of the remaining Frenchmen lost their lives. Soon, however, a letter came from Des Farges saying that he desired to conclude peace. At the same time, the Siamese hostages were sent back. All the French were then released, and the missionaries were permitted to continue their work. Religious freedom was thus restored, in accordance with the immemorial custom of the Kingdom.

It does not appear that any definite Treaty of peace between the Siamese and the French was drawn up at this time, but thenceforward no further serious trouble occurred between them.

King P'etraraja had no desire for hostilities either with France or with the English East India Company. He

had eradicated foreign political influence in Siam and he was satisfied. In June 1690 Elihu Yale, President of Fort St. George, wrote a very friendly letter to the P'ra-k'lang, congratulating King P'etraja on his accession, but at the same time reiterating the Company's claim to £65,000, which was the original cause of the war.

King P'etraja was the less inclined, at this time, to quarrel with foreigners, as he was experiencing serious internal troubles. A rebellion had broken out at Nak'on Nayok, to the east of the capital. The leader was an impostor named T'am T'ien, who had formerly been an attendant of Prince Ap'ai Tot, the brother of King Narai. He gave out that he was the Prince, and gained a great number of adherents. The Uparat, Prince Sarasak, who was on an elephant-hunting expedition when the rebellion broke out, narrowly escaped capture by the insurgents.

The pseudo-Prince and his army reached Ayut'ia, and might, perhaps, have captured the city. A lucky shot, however, killed the elephant on which the impostor was riding. He fell off and was injured, and his rabble army lost heart and dispersed in disorder. He himself was captured and executed.

The inhabitants of many districts near Nak'on Nayok, Lopburi and Saraburi, who had been implicated in this rising, fled from their homes for fear of punishment, so that that part of the country was almost depopulated.'

In 1691 further overtures for peace were made by the East India Company, but the P'ra-k'lang's reply held out no hope of payment of the Company's claim. He said that Phaulkon and White, who were the men responsible for the war, had wronged the King greatly and owed him much, and that as the King had no money to discharge

*1* According to Burmese history, these fugitives settled in Burma



the debt, the Company had better seize the estates of White and Phaulkon, which had been carried to England.

After this, no further negotiations for peace were made, but the war was allowed to die a natural death.

The P'rak'lang who carried on this correspondence with the East India Company appears to have been P'ya Kosa T'ibodi (Pan), formerly P'ra Wisut Sunt'orn, King Narai's ambassador to Louis XIV, who was appointed by King P'etraja to the title and position previously held by his brother under King Narai. His end was a sad one; he fell into disfavour with King P'etraja, and was so cruelly treated that he committed suicide.

Towards the end of 1691, the Governors of K'orat and Nak'on Srit'ammarat rebelled. An expedition was sent first against K'orat, consisting of 10,000 men; they failed to subdue the rebel city, and the General in command asked for reinforcements, much to the fury of the King, who threatened dire consequences if matters were delayed much longer. In the end the town was captured by flying kites, to which were attached flaming braziers; these fell into the city and set the roofs of the houses on fire. The Governor, P'ya Yomarat, escaped to the Peninsula and joined the Srit'ammarat rebels.

In 1692 another army of 10,000 men, supported by a fleet, was sent to cope with the rebels in the south. They first fell in with P'ya Yomarat, the fugitive Governor of K'orat who was waiting near Jaiya with a large force. He was suddenly attacked by night, but his army made a stern resistance, and P'ya Yomarat himself refused to surrender, but died, sword in hand, fighting bravely to the end.

The siege of Nak'on Srit'amarat, which followed, was long and troublesome. The Governor, P'ya Ram Dejo, a Malay, was a man of great determination. His fleet was destroyed and his army was defeated again and again, but he refused to surrender. At last all his supplies were finished and his people dying of starvation. He then killed his wife and family, and escaped by boat, with fifty followers, by the connivance of the Siamese Admiral, P'ya Rajabangsan. This Admiral, also a Malay, was an old friend and companion in arms of the rebel Governor. P'ya Rajabangsan gave his life for his friend, and his severed head was set over the gate of the vanquished city.

In 1697 King Sadet of Cambodia sent a present of a female white elephant to King P'etraja. This shows that the traditional suzerainty of Siam over Cambodia was acknowledged during this King's reign.<sup>1</sup>

In October 1698 Father Tachard again visited Ayut'ia and tried to conclude a new treaty between Siam and France. The King asked for the advice of the Dutch residents, who, of course, urged the danger of ever again allowing the French to obtain a foothold in the Kingdom. Father Tachard aggravated the King's misgivings by talking about building a fort at Tenasserim and a factory at P'etchaburi. This so disquieted the King that he sent troops to both those places to be ready in case of a French invasion. Nothing was arranged with Tachard, and from this time onward France abandoned all political interest in Siam, though the French missionaries continued their work. Their success does not seem to have been great, for Alexander Hamilton, who visited Siam in 1720, said that at that time there were not more than seventy Christian

<sup>1</sup> King Sadet Jai Jett'a of Cambodia reigned from 1690 to 1716, with interval. He abdicated and entered the priesthood several times. The capture of a female white elephant in 1696 is recorded in Cambodian history.

in the Kingdom " and they the most dissolute, lazy, thievish rascals that were to be found in the country."

In 1699 another serious rebellion broke out at K'orat. It was brought about by a Lao visionary or fanatic named Bun K'wang. This man had originally only twenty-eight followers, but his pretensions to possess supernatural powers so terrorised the Governor and population of K'orat that he was allowed to set himself up as ruler of that city under the very nose of the Governor. That worthy seems to have been undecided whom he should fear most, the magician or the King. In the end he persuaded Bun K'wang to go to Lopburi, but by that time the rebel had collected an army of four thousand men. The King, owing to the superstitious folly of the people of K'orat, was obliged to send an army to Lopburi. The people of K'orat who had accompanied the rebels now became ashamed of their weakness, and at the King's command pulled themselves together and ventured to capture the magician and his twenty-eight original supporters. They were handed over to the Royal army and were all executed.

In the same year (1699) King P'etrāja was called upon to interfere in the affairs of Luang P'rabang. That State had been greatly disturbed for several years owing to the claims of various rival Princes to the throne. Finally a certain Prince P'rachao Ong Wiet had set himself up as King at Wiengchan, and a cousin of his, Prince Kingkisarāt, had seized Luang P'rabang. The latter prepared to invade Wiengchan, and Prince Ong Wiet sent to apply to Siam for aid, offering to cement the alliance by the gift of his beautiful daughter. A Siamese army was at once sent to his aid, but no fighting was needed, for the Prince of Luang P'rabang, realising the futility of attacking the combined armies of Wiengchan

and Siam, entered into a Treaty with his cousin, whereby the principality was divided between them, one to have his capital at Luang P'rabang and the other at Wiengchan.<sup>1</sup>

As for the beautiful Princess, she was sent to Ayut'ia, and was presented to the Uparat, Prince Sarasak.

Early in 1703<sup>2</sup> King P'etrāja, who was then aged seventy-one, fell ill. Besides the Uparat, the King had two little sons, named respectively Chao K'wan, borne to him by Princess Yot'a T'ip, King Narai's sister, and 'Tras Noi, the child of Princess Yot'a T'ep, that monarch's daughter. Chao K'wan was aged about fourteen and Tras Noi about ten. Chao K'wan was looked upon by many people as a likely candidate for the throne, as being a descendant of King Prasat T'ong. The Uparat therefore determined to put him out of the way. Pretending that he was going to make him a present of a new horse, he enticed the poor boy into his palace, and caused him to be murdered there. The victim's mother ran weeping to the bedside of the dying King and denounced the murderer. The King roused himself to declare that Prince Sarasak should not succeed to the throne, and sending hastily for his maternal cousin, P'ra P'ijai Surin, he proclaimed him as his heir.<sup>3</sup> The same night he died.

King P'etrāja was not nearly so black as he has been painted. Just as contemporary French writers lavished absurdly extravagant praises on their patron, King Narai, so also they denounced their enemy, King P'etrāja, in

<sup>1</sup> Luang P'rabang history does not mention the intervention of Siam in the dispute.

<sup>2</sup> This date is taken from a table drawn up by Prince Damrong: *The P'ongsawadden* says that King P'etrāja died in 1697. Turpin says 1700. The book called *Statement of K'un Luang Ha Wat*, supposed to have been dictated in Burma by the ex-King Ut'ump'oon of Ayut'ia, gives the date as 1701.

<sup>3</sup> To have made Tras Noi his heir, would, of course, have been equivalent to sentencing him to death. Tras Noi was more fortunate than many other Princes in a like position. He later became a priest, greatly renowned both for his knowledge of religious matters and foreign languages, and died, so far as is known, a natural death.

excessive terms. King P'etraja was a rough, stern old soldier who found himself forced by circumstances to assume the leadership of the anti-French party, and was led on, step by step, to usurp the throne.

Even a very eminent Siamese authority has recorded of King P'etraja that "he was a usurper, and not allowed an honourable place among the Kings of Siam." But, after all, the family at whose expense he usurped the throne were the children of that far more cruel and dishonourable usurper, King Prasat T'ong.

Certainly, King P'etraja was not a model character, but neither was he a "vile scoundrel," as stated by Turpin. His name deserves to be respected in Siam, for he was undoubtedly instrumental in saving the country from foreign domination.

P'ra P'ijai Surin, who had been nominated heir to the throne by King P'etraja on his death-bed, was a harmless nonentity who had no desire to fight Prince Sarasak for the crown. On his cousin's death he at once went to the palace of the Uparat and begged him to accept the reins of Government. The Uparat, after some show of reluctance, became King. He is known to Siamese historians as P'rachao Sūa, or King Tiger.

During the reign of this King, which lasted for just under seven years, no very important event occurred. The country was at peace internally and externally. The King devoted himself to hunting, shooting, fishing, and other less creditable amusements. In his more serious moods he erected and repaired the temples, notably the temple at P'rabat, and improved the canals, especially

<sup>1</sup> He was born at P'ichit in 1652, after the expedition to Chiengmai. In later times a legend sprang up that he was an unacknowledged son of King Narai by a daughter of P'ya San Muiang of Chiengmai, who was married to P'ra P'etraja when pregnant. No contemporary writers mention this story. The compilers of the *P'ongsaxidan* have accepted this myth and embodied it in their book, but they have not altered other passages to suit it, and repeatedly refer to Prince Sarasak as the son of King P'etraja.

the canal known as K'long Mahajai, between Bangkok and Tachin, which was deepened and straightened partly in the reign of "King Tiger" and partly in that of his successor.

It is related of this King that on one occasion, when he was being rowed along K'long Mahajai in his royal barge, the steersman carelessly ran the barge aground, damaging the prow. According to the law of that time, this was an offence punishable by death. The steersman begged that he might be executed at once, but the King, being in a gracious mood, caused a mud image to be made, and had it decapitated in the man's stead. This did not satisfy the steersman, who pleaded piteously for death, lest the Law might be brought into contempt. The King ended by humouring him, so he was beheaded after all, and a shrine was erected to his memory on the bank of the canal, which can be seen there to this day.

"King Tiger" was fond of going about in disguise. On one occasion he attended a village boxing-match, and challenged successively two local boxers. He defeated them both, and was paid two *ticals* by the ringmaster.

Would that all his actions had been as harmless! He was a cruel, intemperate and depraved man. Turpin says that he married Princess Yot'a T'ep,' one of his father's widows. One of the gates of his palace became known as the "Gate of Corpses," from the numerous little coffins which were borne out through it, containing murdered children, victims of his lust and cruelty.

In his fits of fury he was prepared to sacrifice even his own flesh and blood. Once, when hunting elephants, he sent his two sons ahead to arrange a causeway across a marsh. When crossing it, his elephant sank into the

mud. He flew into a passion, accused the two Princes of a plot to cause him to fall from his elephant and then murder him, and would have had them both flogged to death had not the aged Chief Queen of King P'etraja interceded for them.

During this reign Siam was afflicted with a most fearful famine and drought.<sup>1</sup> The rice was all exhausted, and the waters of the Menam River were covered with an evil-smelling green slime. Most of the fish died, and the few that remained were poisonous to eat. Sickness broke out, and the King, fearing that the use of the polluted water would foster the spread of disease, forbade the people to drink it.

The people, who could obtain no other water, became restless, and a rebellion was imminent. Thereupon it was announced that the god Indra<sup>2</sup> had appeared at the city gate and had declared that the green scum was a panacea for all the diseases in the land. The whole populace rushed to the river to anoint themselves with the scum and the polluted water. After fifteen days heavy rains descended, causing the water to overflow, and the famine and disease came to an end.

King P'rachao Sūa, worn out by drink and debauchery, brought his short and inglorious reign to a conclusion by dying in the year 1709, aged forty-four. The nickname by which he is known shows what his subjects thought of him. Modern readers will, perhaps, compare him to some less noble beast than a tiger.

King P'rachao Sūa, at the time of his death, was on bad terms with his eldest son, and it was his intention that his

<sup>1</sup> This is taken from Turpin, who, as usual, gives no date. There was a severe famine at Chiengmai in 1703, and the famine in southern Siam may have been in the same year.

<sup>2</sup> Buddhism does not deny the existence of the Brahman deities. Indra and several others are recognised in Siam and are looked upon as powerful angels or spirits. They are not, however, worshipped by orthodox Buddhists.

second son should succeed him. The young Prince, however, waived all claims to the throne, and the elder brother succeeded without opposition. He assumed the title of King Pu'mint'araja, but is known to Siamese historians as King T'ai Sra.<sup>1</sup> His younger brother, Prince Bant'un Noi, was appointed Maha Uparat.

King T'ai Sra was twenty-eight years of age when he ascended the throne. The first ten years of his reign were peaceful and uneventful, but in 1717 he was induced to intervene in the tangled politics of Cambodia.

In 1714 a young King, Sri T'ammaraaja, had succeeded to the throne of Cambodia. His uncle, the ex-King Keo Fa, who had abdicated some years previously, declared war on the young King, and called in a Cochin Chinese army to his aid. King Sri T'ammaraaja was dethroned, and fled, with his younger brother, to Ayut'ia, to appeal for the help of King T'ai Sra.

After a fruitless attempt to obtain the restoration of the fugitive King by peaceful means, two large Siamese armies were sent to Cambodia.<sup>2</sup> The main army, under P'ya Chakri, advanced by way of Siemrap. The smaller army was supported by a considerable fleet, both army and fleet being under the leadership of a Chinese who had recently been made P'rak'lang, with the usual title of P'ya Kosa Tibodi. P'ya Kosa proved to be both incompetent and cowardly. He advanced along the sea coast and captured and burnt the town of Bantéay M'eas.<sup>3</sup> His army was, however, attacked there by

<sup>1</sup> This name means "King End-of-the-lake" and is derived from the situation of the palace in which he resided.

<sup>2</sup> Turpin says that the army was of 50,000 men, and another 20,000 with the fleet. Both Turpin and Hamilton (*Asiatic Voyages*, London, 1811) make no mention of any Siamese success, and evidently only refer to the progress of the army under P'ya Kosa. Cambodian history admits that King Keo Fa agreed to render homage to Siam.

<sup>3</sup> On the Gulf of Si. Better known as H-tia



a combined Cambodian and Cochinchinese force, and suffered one of the greatest disasters recorded in Siamese history. The soldiers were in poor condition for fighting, as their provisions had run short and they had been forced to kill and eat their baggage animals. This unaccustomed diet made many of them ill. Nevertheless they were resisting the enemy bravely when P'ya Kosa, whose fleet was being attacked by a much smaller enemy fleet, fell into a panic owing to the loss of a few of his ships, and fled with the remainder out to sea. This threw the land army into consternation, and they turned and fled in disorder, losing a very large number of men and all their artillery.

The northern army, under P'ya Chakri, was much more successful. The Cambodians were defeated in several small actions, and the Siamese advanced to Udong, at that time the capital. King Keo Fa thereupon offered to do homage by sending the usual gold and silver trees as a symbol of subjection to Siam. His offer was accepted, and he was allowed to remain on his throne without further interference. It must be admitted that this was only a partial success for Siam, as the avowed object of the expedition was to restore King Sri T'ammaraaja, which was never done. Considering the utter defeat of P'ya Kosa's army, the partial success gained by P'ya Chakri was not, however, to be despised.

The rest of King T'ai Sra's reign was spent in peaceful pursuits. He completed the Mahajai canal, the redigging of which had been begun by his father, and built or repaired a number of temples.

When King T'ai Sra's sons began to grow up, he made the same fatal mistake which had led to so much

bloodshed in the past. He tried to alter the order of succession, and to pass over the claims of his brother, the Maha Uparat, in favour of his own eldest son, Prince Naren. This Prince, who was very fond of his uncle, declined to agree to what he regarded as an act of injustice, and not long after retired into a monastery.

The King, however, was determined that his brother should not succeed him. He fell ill not long afterwards, and feeling that his end was near, he proclaimed as his successor his second son, Prince Ap'ai. The Uparat protested, offering to forgo his claim to the crown in favour of his eldest nephew, but not for Prince Ap'ai, who had no reasonable right to become King. Uncle and nephew began to collect their adherents, with a view to contesting the matter by force of arms. In the midst of these warlike preparations King T'ai Sra died, in January 1733, aged fifty-four.

King T'ai Sra is spoken of by Siamese historians as a cruel and sinful man, mainly, it would seem, on the ground that he was extremely fond of hunting and fishing. He does not, however, appear to have been hard or unmerciful to his subjects, and he cannot be regarded as a bad or unsuccessful ruler. The worst error of his life was made when he was dying, for his unjust attempt to alter the succession was the cause of much bloodshed and misery.

During his reign (in 1717) important events took place in Chiengmai. A Lao named T'ep Singh raised a rebellion against the Burmese, many of whom were massacred, including the Burmese Prince, Min Renra, a cousin of the King of Burma. T'ep Singh only ruled Chiengmai for a short time. He was in his turn ousted by a Luang Prabang Prince, Ong K'an, who routed a

Burmese army sent against him in 1728, and was afterwards crowned as Prince of Chiangmai. Chiangmai, which had been under Burmese rule ever since 1556, maintained a precarious independence from 1728 till 1763, though much disturbed by internal strife during most of that period.

## CHAPTER XV

### REIGN OF KING BOROMAKOT, KING UT'UMP'ON AND KING EKAT'AT. DESTRUCTION OF AYUT'IA

THE accession of several of the Kings of Ayut'ia had been accompanied by disturbances, but in every previous instance the conflict had been short and sharp, and had not involved great loss of life. The contest which followed the death of King T'ai Sra was of quite a different kind. It lasted for several days, and was the cause of great bloodshed and suffering.

Prince Ap'ai's party was numerically stronger than that of his uncle, the Uparat. He had an army of about 40,000 men, and most of the high officials were with him. The Uparat had only some 5,000 men, but his party was united, while that of Prince Ap'ai was torn asunder by internal jealousies. The Uparat, moreover, could count on the support of most of the inhabitants of Ayut'ia.

After a good deal of firing between the two palaces, P'ya P'rak'lang and P'ya Chakri, the principal supporters of the young Prince, advanced with their forces against the palace of the Uparat, routing his followers and driving them within the walls. The same night, however, the Uparat made a sortie, drove back the besiegers, and advanced towards the Grand Palace. The troops of Prince Ap'ai now began to desert him in large numbers, and P'ya P'rak'lang and P'ya Chakri lost courage and escaped from the palace. Prince Ap'ai, finding himself almost deserted, fled away by night, accompanied by his younger brother, Prince Borommet.

His elder brother, the Priest-Prince Naren, who had declined to accept the crown, retired to his monastery.

The Uparat now assumed the crown, with the title of King Maha T'anmaraja II, but he is usually known by the name of King Boromakot.<sup>1</sup>

The two fugitive Princes got away by boat, with very few followers, and concealed themselves among the reeds of a swamp. Here they remained hidden for a week, but hunger at last compelled them to send out a trusted retainer to buy food. He was recognised, the swamp was searched, and the Princes were captured and taken back to Ayut'ia, where they met with the usual fate of unsuccessful competitors for the crown.

P'ya P'rak'lang and P'ya Chakri assumed the yellow robe. They were, however, brought back to Ayut'ia<sup>2</sup> and quietly despatched by night, as the King hesitated to bring them to trial, for fear of offending the priesthood.

The new King took a terrible revenge on his opponents, very large numbers of whom were executed.<sup>3</sup> So great was his resentment that he even thought of refusing to cremate the corpse of the late King, and expressed an intention of flinging it into the river. His better nature, however, triumphed, and he abstained from thus avenging himself upon the dead.

In 1733 a Chinese rising took place, and three hundred Chinese attacked the palace. They were, however, dispersed, and forty of their ringleaders were captured and executed.

King Boromakot had a good deal of trouble with his children. At the time of his accession his family was

<sup>1</sup> P'rachao nai Boromakot. This title is usually given to a king who is dead but not yet cremated. In this particular case it has been retained.

<sup>2</sup> Turpin says that they came back, relying on the yellow robe for protection.

<sup>3</sup> According to Turpin, more persons were executed than were killed in the fighting.

already a very large one, and when he died in 1756 he left no less than 123 children, fifteen by his three Queens, and 108 by inferior wives.

His eldest son, who bore the title of Krom K'un Sena P'itak was a violent and unruly youth. He bore a great hatred to his cousin, Prince Naren, for whom the King had a great partiality. On one occasion Prince Naren, who was still a member of the Buddhist priesthood, went to the palace to visit the King, who was unwell. Prince Sena P'itak made a savage attack on him with a dagger. He was not injured, but the King, on hearing of this crime, was so incensed that he gave orders for his son to be flogged. The Priest-Prince interceded for the culprit and even took him to live under his protection in his temple. The offender was ultimately pardoned, but two of his half-brothers, who were implicated in the crime, were flogged to death.

In 1740 Prince Sena P'itak was appointed Maha Uparat.

At this time Siam, though somewhat depopulated, was seemingly in a most happy and prosperous condition. Every writer refers to the reign of King Boromakot as though it was the golden age of Siam, and speaks of the magnificence of the Court and the happiness of the people. The truth is, however, that the long period of peace had done the country no good. Rich and poor alike had become idle and luxurious, and were unfit for warfare or fatigue.

In Burma events were happening which were destined to have serious results for Siam. In 1734 the capital of Burma was moved to Ava. This change was unpopular among the Peguans, and stirred up their latent disaffection. In 1737 the Burmese Governor of Pegu, Maung Tha Aung, rebelled against the King of Burma,

Maha T'ammara-j'a Dhiphati, and proclaimed himself independent. He was, however, murdered by his Peguan subjects in 1740. The King's uncle, who was then sent to govern Pegu, was at first well received, but later shared the fate of Maung Tha Aung, and a Shan priest, who pretended to be a scion of the Burmese Royal Family, was chosen in 1742 to be King of independent Pegu, with the title of Saming T'oh.<sup>1</sup>

The Burmese Governors of Martaban and Tavoy, who remained faithful to Ava, found themselves cut off from all assistance. In despair, they fled, with several hundred followers, to Ayut'ia, and appealed to King Boromakot for an asylum. He received them with great kindness, and provided them with dwelling-places. From this time onwards his policy became more and more pro-Burmese. He probably thought that the power of Burma was waning, and that it was unwise to encourage or assist the Peguans, who seemed likely to become too powerful. The new King of Pegu, moreover, caused personal offence to King Boromakot by writing to suggest an alliance with Siam, and at the same time asking for a Siamese Princess in marriage. The Siamese monarch refused, with some indignation, to marry any of his daughters to a man whom he looked upon as a mere upstart. Saming T'oh was more fortunate in another direction, for he obtained as one of his Queens a daughter of Chao Ong K'am, the Prince of Chiengmai.

In 1744 the King of Burma sent an embassy to Ayut'ia—the first for over a hundred years—to thank King Boromakot for his generous treatment of the fugitives from Pegu, and to obtain, if possible, Siamese aid to subdue the Peguans, or, at the very least, a promise

of neutrality. The Burmese envoys were very honourably received, and in 1746 a Siamese embassy had an equally warm welcome at Ava. The Siamese envoys arrived at an opportune moment, for the Peguans, who had captured Prome in 1744, were marching on Ava. The arrival of the Siamese envoys was exaggerated into a report that a Siamese army was on its way to assist the Burmese. The Peguans retired, and on their way back were attacked and defeated by the Burmese.

Saming T'oh's marriage to a Chiengmai Princess was his undoing. He had another wife, the daughter of one P'ya Dala. She complained that she was being neglected, and instigated her father to plot against her husband. In 1746 P'ya Dala took advantage of the absence of Saming T'oh at an elephant hunt to hatch a conspiracy against him. Saming T'oh was forced to retire to Chiengmai, and P'ya Dala became King of Pegu. The fugitive King, after a fruitless attempt to regain his throne with the help of a Chiengmai army, proceeded in 1750 to Ayut'ia, to beg for the aid of King Boromakot. The latter still cherished some feelings of resentment against Saming T'oh for having dared to suggest a matrimonial alliance, and though the luckless fugitive was at first received well, he was before long arrested and cast into prison.

P'ya Dala now sent an envoy to demand the surrender of Saming T'oh, but King Boromakot rightly refused to send away to certain death a man who had sought his protection. As, however, Saming T'oh's presence at Ayut'ia seemed likely to be embarrassing, he was put on board a Chinese junk to be taken to China. He was, however, let loose on the coast of Annam, and found his way back to Chiengmai. His subsequent history may as well be related here. In 1756, hearing



of Alaungpaya's victories over P'ya Dala, he left Chieng-mai with several hundred followers, and offered his services to the Burmese usurper. Alaungpaya, distrusting him, detained him in custody until his death, which occurred in 1758. His career was certainly a strange and romantic one.

In the year 1750 King Boromakot was called upon to interfere in the affairs of Cambodia. King Rama T'ibodi of that country, who succeeded to the throne in 1748, was expelled less than a year later by a rival claimant, Prince Satt'a, with the aid of a Cochin-Chinese army. A Siamese force was sent to set matters right, but Prince Ong Eng, the brother of Prince Satt'a, made formal submission to Siam, and Prince Satt'a was allowed to remain on the throne. On his death a few months later, King Rama T'ibodi was once more placed on the throne of Cambodia. It would appear that at this period the right of Siam to regulate the succession was not seriously disputed by any party in Cambodia.

In March 1752 the Uparaja of Pegu, a brother of P'ya Dala, captured Ava and took away the King of Burma as a prisoner to Hanthawadi.<sup>1</sup> The whole of Burma thus fell under the sway of King P'ya Dala, and it seemed as though the power of Burma had vanished for ever. Immediately, however, the standard of rebellion was raised by the petty Burmese headman of the village of Moksobo (now called Shwebo). In a short time this man, usually known by his assumed title of Alaungpaya, had collected an army of five thousand men. In December 1753 he retook Ava, and in May 1757 Hanthawadi was captured, and P'ya Dala taken

<sup>1</sup> According to Burmese history the King of Ava was executed in 1754 for conspiring against P'ya Dala. A Peguan chronicle, however, states that he lived until 1757 and died of a broken heart during the siege of Hanthawadi by Alaungpaya.

prisoner, thus re-establishing Burmese supremacy and bringing to an end the short-lived Peguan Kingdom.

While these stirring events were happening in Burma, King Boromakot was occupied with religious and domestic affairs. In 1753 an embassy was sent to Ayut'ia by the King of Ceylon, to ask for the loan of some Siamese Buddhist priests to purify and reform the Buddhist Church in his Kingdom, which was stated to have become very effete and corrupt. King Boromakot, much flattered by the compliment thus paid to the purity of the faith in his own realm, and to himself as a religious monarch, received the Ceylonese ambassadors with great pomp, and sent a commission of fifteen Buddhist priests to Ceylon. They later returned, and reported that they had been very successful in their purifying and reforming mission. The Chief of this mission was a monk named Upali. Most of the Buddhist monks in Ceylon at the present day belong to the sect called Upaliwong, or Sayamwong, which owes its origin to King Boromakot's mission.

In April 1756 King Boromakot made the discovery that his eldest son, the Maha Uparat, was carrying on an intrigue with two of his own wives. The King's fury passed all bounds, and he gave orders for the Uparat to be scourged two hundred and thirty times. He expired after the one hundred and eightieth stroke. The offending ladies were also flogged to death.

The King had only two surviving sons of the first rank, namely Prince Ekat'at and Prince Ut'ump'on. He was urged to appoint the former to be Uparat, but he refused to do so, as he considered him to be incapable of carrying on the Government. Moreover, this Prince suffered from a disfiguring disease, supposed to have been leprosy. Prince Ut'ump'on was a clever and

studious man, very religious by nature, and greatly beloved by the people. He was therefore appointed Uparat.

In May 1758 King Boromakot died, aged seventy-seven, after a reign of twenty-six years. He was one of the best of the King's of Ayut'ia. He was a lover of peace, and managed, throughout his long reign, to avoid becoming involved in any serious war. His people were prosperous, happy and contented, and there were very few thieves and malefactors in Siam in his time. It was said that it was even unnecessary for a man to have a fence round his house. Although King Boromakot was capable, when offended, of showing great severity, he was by nature kind and merciful, good-tempered, and fond of harmless jollity. Each year, during the threshing season, he was wont to proceed, with all his Court, to live in the *padi* fields, and to relax himself by enjoying rustic dances and songs, and viewing pony races and all kinds of country sports.

King Boromakot was responsible for a great deal of legislation during his reign, but few of his laws are of much interest to-day. He was severe on elephant and cattle thieves, and enacted that such offenders should be punished by tattooing them on the hand and forehead for the first offence, and by mutilation for subsequent offences. Cattle theft is very prevalent in Siam at the present time. Perhaps the reintroduction of King Boromakot's law might do some good.

Prince Ut'ump'on' succeeded to the throne on the death of his father. He is usually known in Siamese history by the name of King Dok Madüa (Figflower). His first act was to order the execution of three of his

<sup>1</sup> In the book called *The Statement of K'un Luang Ha Wat*, supposed to have been dictated by this King himself, he is always called by the name Ut'ump'on: Ut'ump'on is a form of the Sanscrit word for a figflower.

half-brothers, who were collecting large bands of armed followers and appeared to be plotting a rebellion.

The new King's position on the throne was very insecure, as his elder brother, Prince Ekat'at, who had many supporters, constantly interfered in every detail of the administration. After the cremation of the old King, he therefore abdicated, and retired to the temple called Wat Pradu, which he had himself caused to be built. His reign lasted for only three months.

The abdication of King Ut'ump'on was a great misfortune for Siam. The new King, Ekat'at, who assumed the title of Boromaraja V, was a man of poor intelligence and worthless character. In a book written only twenty-two years after his death he is described as "void of intelligence, unsettled in spirit, fearful of sin, negligent in his kingly duties, hesitating alike to do good or to do evil." He was, in short, utterly unfitted to guide his country through the perils which were destined to overwhelm it. Moreover, the existence, at one and the same time, of a King and an ex-King caused faction and disunion at the very period when union was most urgently needed.

King Ekat'at did not open his reign badly. He built several new temples and pagodas, and introduced a law standardising the currency of the Kingdom, as well as the weights and measures.

A plot was hatched almost at once to replace King Ut'tump'on on the throne. The ringleader was a half-brother of the King, Prince T'ep P'ip'it. His design was revealed by the ex-King himself, after exacting a promise that the lives of the conspirators should be spared. The smaller fry were flogged and imprisoned and Prince T'ep P'ip'it was exiled to Ceylon.

Fully occupied in suppressing these internal intrigues,

King Ekat'at never gave a thought to the dangers across the frontier, nor troubled himself about the continued successes of the Burmese usurper.

Many different reasons have been given for the outbreak of war between Burma and Siam in 1759. The truth appears to be that no real reason existed except the ambition of Alaungpaya. The greatest of his predecessors had subjugated Siam and the Lao States, and he resented the existence of independent Kingdoms on his borders. By 1759 he had induced Nan, Chiengsen, Payao, and most of the other Lao States to acknowledge his suzerainty. Only Chiangmai (which, under Prince Ong K'am maintained a precarious independence) and Ayut'ia ignored the very existence of the Burmese upstart. Chiangmai and Ayut'ia must therefore, Alaungpaya thought, be made to bend the knee.

Early in 1759 some Peguan rebels, who had made a raid on Syriam, escaped by a French ship. Bad weather compelled this vessel to put in at the Siamese port of Tenasserim. The Burmese demanded the surrender of the ship. The Siamese refused, and permitted it to proceed on its voyage. This was a good enough excuse for war. A further excuse was afforded by the escape to Tenasserim of some of the rebel inhabitants of Tavoy, which was captured by the Burmese in the same year. Alaungpaya's son, Mangra, and his General, Mingaing Nohrata, at once invaded Siam. The Burmese monarch himself followed close behind them with a large army. Tenasserim was weakly defended and fell at once, and the Burmese crossed the Peninsula and commenced to advance northwards.

Nobody in Siam seems to have realised that a serious invasion was possible from the south. The Burmese plan was, in fact, a very rash one, for it involved marching

for several days with the sea to the right and a high range of mountains to the left. Fortunately for the Burmese, the Siamese expected the main enemy attack to be made by one of the usual frontier routes, and three armies were sent to guard the vulnerable points on the western border. An army of 20,000 men, under P'ya Yomarat, was, however, sent down the Peninsula, and ought to have been able to keep back the Burmese. It was defeated near Kuiburi, and, almost before the danger was realised, P'etchaburi and Ratburi had been captured, and Alaungpaya was encamped within forty miles of the capital.

The ease with which this invasion was carried out was due partly to the mistakes of those in power and partly to the fact that the Siamese had become unused to warfare. There had been no serious fighting since the somewhat inglorious invasion of Cambodia in 1717.

Consternation reigned at Ayut'ia. The King was blamed for his lack of foresight and was urged to abdicate. The Priest-King Ut'ump'on, was recalled from his temple and reassumed the reins of power; but it was too late to do anything but make hurried preparations to prepare the city for a siege.

The first Burmese attack was repulsed, but in April 1760 Alaungpaya had received reinforcements and was able completely to invest the city. He tried to induce the Siamese to surrender by asserting that he was a Bodhisattva, or embryo Buddha, ordained by Heaven to reform the Buddhist religion. His impious pretensions were laughed to scorn.

The siege continued for a month. In May 1760 a large cannon was placed by the Burmese on a mound, for the purpose of shooting into the King of Siam's palace. Alaungpaya himself superintended the loading

of this weapon. One day it burst, and the Burmese usurper was severely wounded.<sup>1</sup> Even before this accident, Alaungpaya had been considering the advisability of giving up the siege, as he had not come prepared for a long campaign, and dreaded the advent of the rains, which had proved so disastrous to King Tabeng Shwe Ti in 1559. The cause of the King's illness was concealed, but orders were issued for the army to retire to Burma by the Melamao route. The dying monarch was carried in a litter in the midst of his dispirited troops, now harassed all the way by the Siamese. He died in May 1760 at Taikkala, just before the Salween River was reached. He was only forty-five years of age. His early career was one of which any man might be proud; but he sullied his name by making an unjust attack upon an unoffending neighbour, and rendered himself absurd by his religious pretensions.

The danger through which they had passed failed to teach the Siamese the necessity for union. King Ut'ump'on, who had thought that his resumption of the crown was to be permanent, soon found his brother intriguing against him, and in 1762,<sup>2</sup> fearing that his life was in danger, he retired once more to his monastery.

The indifference of the Siamese to the Burmese peril was fostered by the difficulties in which Manglok,<sup>3</sup> the eldest son and successor of Alaungpaya, found himself. Rebels rose up against him on every side, and for two years he was forced to fight for his throne. By the year 1762 he had, however, gained control over his whole realm, with the exception of Tavoy, which was under the rule of one Huit'ongcha.

<sup>1</sup> Burmese history makes no mention of this, but alleges that the illness of Alaungpaya was caused by a boil or carbuncle.

<sup>2</sup> This is Turpin's date. The *P'ongsawadan* says that this second abdication took place in July 1760.

<sup>3</sup> Known in Burma as Naung-dea-vyi.

In 1763 Chiengmai, which was regarded by the Burmese merely as a rebel province, was attacked. The Chief of Lump'un fled to P'ijai, and he and the new Prince of Chiengmai, who had succeeded his brother Chao Ong K'am the year before, appealed to King Ekat'at for aid. An army was sent north under P'ya P'itsanulok, but before anything could be done, Chiengmai had fallen (July 1763), and a Burmese General, Ap'ai K'ammini, had been placed there as Governor.

Later in the same year the Burmese captured Luang P'rabang.

With Burmese influence thus extending over the whole of the Lao States, King Ekat'at would have done well to adopt a conciliatory attitude. Instead of this, he received an embassy from Huit'ongcha, the rebel ruler of Tavoy, and accepted from him emblems of vassalage, thus formally taking under his protection a revolted Burmese province, on the ground that in former times Tavoy had belonged to Siam.

Tavoy did not long enjoy the nominal protection of Siam. In November 1763 King Manglok of Burma died, after a reign of only three years. His younger brother and successor, Mangra,<sup>1</sup> at once prepared to subdue Tavoy, and it was captured by his General, Maha Nohrata,<sup>2</sup> without much difficulty. The rebel Governor fled to Mergui. The Siamese refused to surrender him, so Siam was once more invaded, and Mergui and Tenasserim occupied. The Burmese then proceeded to occupy all the Siamese Peninsular States, meeting with very little opposition until they reached P'etchaburi. There they were, for the time being, held up by an army under a Chinese General, P'ya Tak—

<sup>1</sup> Called King Sri Suthammaraja Dhiphati. Hsinbushin in *Haroc's History*.

<sup>2</sup> This was a new Maha Nohrata. The original General of that name had rebelled and was killed early in 1763.



better known as P'ya Taksin,<sup>1</sup> later King of Siam—and retreated back to Tenasserim.

On the capture of Tenasserim, Huit'ongcha, the rebel Governor of Tavoy, fled, accompanied by Prince T'ep P'ip'it, who had returned from his exile in Ceylon. King Ekat'at had them both arrested. Prince T'ep P'ip'it was kept in custody at Chantabun.

Chiengmai and Luang P'rabang having fallen without any very stiff fighting, and the possibility of a successful invasion of Siam from the south having been twice demonstrated, King Mangra now determined to use his northern and southern armies to converge upon Ayut'ia from both sides. At the same time he equipped a third army which was to invade Siam by the Three Pagodas route.

Siam had a respite of almost a year, owing to a rebellion at Chiengmai, which resulted in the flight of the Burmese Governor. By the end of 1764, however, the rebellion was suppressed, and in June 1765 a Burmese army of 5,000 men left Chiengmai for the south, whilst an equal number crossed the western frontier.

The Burmese<sup>a</sup> adopted towards the population of Siam a policy of "frightfulness." Every town or village which offered the slightest resistance was ruthlessly destroyed, and the inhabitants either killed or taken as slaves, regardless of age or sex. As a result of this, most of the people on the line of march fled to the jungle on the approach of the Burmese army.

The same methods were adopted by the southern army, which left Tenasserim in October 1765, and by the end of November had occupied P'etchaburi and

<sup>1</sup> His personal name was Sin, and he had held the office of Governor of Tak, near Raheng. European writers have joined together his name and his title.

Ratburi without any very serious opposition. In the same month the northern army, now greatly increased by numbers of forced auxiliaries from Chiangmai, Luang.P'rabang and other Lao States, occupied P'ijai, Raheng, Swank'alok, and Suk'ot'ai, most of the inhabitants fleeing at their approach. P'itsanulok was the scene of civil war between the Governor and Prince Chit, a rebellious cousin of King Ekak'at. The Governor got the upper hand, and killed the Prince. This encouraged him to defy the Burmese, and they decided not to attack him, but to leave P'itsanulok unmolested for the time being.

By December 1765 the Burmese were attacking T'anaburi (Bangkok). An English sea-captain named Powney,<sup>1</sup> who had ingratiated himself with King Ekak'at by presenting him with a lion and a rare kind of bird, undertook the defence of T'anaburi, and succeeded in inflicting great damage on the Burmese. When, however, one of the T'anaburi forts was captured by the enemy, and his ship was exposed to the fire of the captured fort, Powney retired to Nont'aburi. There he continued his gallant stand. The Burmese induced him, by a ruse, to send a landing-party ashore, which was ambushed and attacked, one Englishman losing his life in the engagement.<sup>2</sup>

Powney now applied for more ammunition. This was refused him, as the King was becoming jealous of his success, and the people saw in him a potential second Phaulkon. So the brave English captain sailed away, leaving to his fate the ungrateful monarch in whose defence he had risked his life. Nont'aburi fell, and by

<sup>1</sup> This name is given in Pinkerton's Voyages. Turpin calls him Panni. Siamese writers refer to him as Alangka Puni.

<sup>2</sup> This is from Turpin, who wrote only a few years later, and derived his information from the Jesuits, who were certainly not pro-English.

February 1766 the Burmese were once again before the walls of Ayut'ia.

While his country was being devastated both north and south, and his subjects slaughtered or enslaved, King Ekut'at, inefficient and debauched as ever, hardly realised the danger in which he stood. Only the actual sight of the Burmese besiegers roused him to some sense of his peril, and feverish efforts were made to defend the capital. Even at this critical time, however, he was inclined to rely far more on all kinds of superstitious charms and magic amulets, and his people, encouraged by his example, wasted their time in seeking for talismans to render themselves invisible or invulnerable.

The Burmese armies from the north and the south probably did not number, in all, more than about 40,000 men, and Siam ought to have been in a position to cope with them. Why, then, was so feeble a resistance made? Cowardice, says Turpin; and this same charge of cowardice has been levelled against the Siamese by more recent writers. But no person who really knows Siam believes the Siamese to be cowards. Man for man, they can well bear comparison, as regards courage, with any other Eastern race. It was mismanagement, disunion, and lethargy in high places which rendered Siam so easy a prey for the Burmese. Had a monarch like King Naresuen been seated on the throne, the Burmese would never have seen the walls of Ayut'ia.

It must not be supposed, however, that the Burmese had no more fighting to do. There was a guerilla army of about 5,000 men, under the leadership of men of the people, which resisted the Burmese for many months in the neighbourhood of the village called Bangrachan. Not until seven separate attacks had been made upon

them, entailing very heavy losses, were they at last dispersed. Moreover, during the earlier months of the siege of Auyt'ia, numerous sorties were made against the invaders, in some of which the Christian inhabitants of the city took a conspicuous part. Sometimes partial successes were gained, and the Burmese lost numbers of men, but no really important damage was inflicted on them.

In May 1766 a Burmese army of 3,000 men had to be told off to deal with Prince T'ep P'ip'it, who had left the priesthood and established himself at the head of about 10,000 men at Prachin. He was defeated, and fled to K'orat.

The Siamese had hoped that the advent of the rains would force the Burmese to retire, but this hope was disappointed. Forts were built on all the rising ground round Ayut'ia, and the invaders commandeered vast numbers of boats, and made ready to continue the siege even in the face of floods.

In September 1766 the Burmese seized a strong position only about half a mile from the city, menacing the Christian quarter and the compound of the Dutch East India Company. A desperate attempt was made by the Christians and some Chinese troops to defend their quarter, but by December both the Christian quarter and the Dutch compound were in the hands of the enemy. Shortly before this happened, a final attempt was made to carry out an attack on the besiegers on a large scale. A great flotilla of boats was fitted out to attack the Burmese forts, which must have been at this time like islands amidst the flooded country. There were in all 160 boats, each with three cannon on board, and manned by an army of 6,000 men, under the command of P'ya P'etchaburi and P'ya Taksin. The result

was another defeat. P'ya P'etchaburi was killed in action, together with large numbers of his men, and the remnants of his scattered fleet with difficulty escaped to Ayut'ia.

P'ya Taksin took no active part in this battle, and on his return to Ayut'ia he was charged with failing to render proper aid to his colleague. He fell into disgrace, and not long afterwards he again incurred the Royal displeasure through firing some of the large cannon at the enemy without first obtaining permission from the King; for an absurd order had been passed that none of the larger cannon were to be discharged without sanction. P'ya Taksin then fled away from the doomed city with 500 followers. The Burmese can hardly have suspected that this "contemptible little army" was destined to develop into a force capable of freeing Siam from their domination.

At the end of the rains the Burmese received reinforcements, and from that time the Siamese made but little serious resistance; one fort after another fell into the hands of the enemy, and the interior of the city now formed an easy target for the Burmese cannon. The miserable inhabitants were almost starving. As though famine were not enough, an epidemic broke out, and the streets were strewn with corpses, which were left to be devoured by the pariah dogs. To culminate the misery of the besieged, on January 7th, 1767, a great fire broke out, which consumed 10,000 houses.

The Burmese General, Maha Nohrata, died early in 1767, but any hopes which the Siamese may have founded on that event were vain. The Burmese now saw success within their grasp, and pressed on with the siege.

King Ekat'at, seeing that all was lost, offered to surrender his capital and to become a vassal of the King of Burma. He was told, in reply, that no other

terms but unconditional surrender would be considered.

Filled with the courage of despair, the Siamese managed to hold out for another three months. At length, on Tuesday, April 7th, 1767, a tremendous effort was made by the besiegers. Fires were kindled against the walls, and cannon were fired simultaneously from every side. At last a breach was made, the Burmese fought their way in, and the city fell into their hands, after a siege of fourteen months.

The victors behaved like Vandals. The palace, the principal buildings, and thousands of private houses were soon a prey to flames, and their sacrilegious lust for destruction did not permit the victors to spare even the temples dedicated to the cult of their own faith. All the largest and most beautiful images of Buddha were hacked in pieces, and many of them were burnt for the sake of the gold leaf with which they were coated. Plunder, and still more plunder, was the watchword. Men, women and children were flogged and tortured to make them reveal the hiding-places where their few treasures or savings were concealed.

King Ekat'at fled from his palace in a small boat. The exact manner of his final fate is uncertain. Some say that he wandered about in the jungle until he died of hunger and exposure. The Burmese historian relates how a brother of the King recognised his mangled remains among a heap of the slain at one of the city gates. In either case, a miserable end for the successor of so many great Kings, unworthy though he undoubtedly was.

The ex-King Ut'ump'on was torn from the shelter of his temple and taken away to Burma, where he ended his days in captivity in 1796. His fellow-captives were numerous, including most of the members of the Royal Family, hundreds of officials, and of soldiers and peasantry

a vast number, variously estimated from 30,000 to 200,000.

A great amount of treasure, such as gold and jewels, was found in the palace, also quantities of arms and ammunition. Of the latter only the best and most curious cannon and guns were taken away to Burma. The remainder were destroyed or thrown into the river.

Thus fell Ayut'ia, four hundred and seventeen years after its foundation by King Rama T'ibodi I. In 1568 the city fell through treachery, in 1767 through the inefficiency and corruption of those in power. A new Ayut'ia may to-day be seen, but the old Ayut'ia was never rebuilt. It is still a mass of ruins, over which the tropical jungle spreads like a green mantle, as though to hide the handiwork of the Burmese from the sight of Heaven.

Among other irreplaceable treasures, almost all the written records of the Kingdom were burnt, and for many years it seemed as though all certain trace of the history of Siam had vanished. But later Kings were destined to collect and piece together the scattered fragments, until, little by little, some account of the story of the old capital was written down, full of gaps and errors, yet still retaining some semblance of the truth.

## CHAPTER XVI

### REIGN OF KING TAKSIN

It has been said, and with some truth, by a Siamese author, that "the King of Hanthawadi waged war like a monarch, but the King of Ava like a robber." By this is meant that King Bhureng Nong's invasion of Siam was made with the intention of reducing the Kingdom to the position of a vassal, but King Mengra's invasion, which was undertaken without any real cause, had no other object than the ruin of Siam, and the acquisition of plunder and slaves.

Having, as they thought, so crushed and terrorised the Siamese nation as to render its recuperation impossible for many years, the Burmese withdrew a large part of their army, leaving only a comparatively small force, under the command of a General named Sugyi, to control the country. Sugyi was established in a camp near the ruined capital, called the camp of the Three Bo Trees.

P'ya Taksin, with his five hundred followers, managed to shake off his Burmese pursuers, and established himself near Rayong, on the east coast of the Gulf of Siam. His own fellow-countrymen in that region were at first by no means at all certain whether to regard him as a rebel or a deliverer, but before the fall of Ayut'ia he had quelled all opposition and was in full control of the Rayong and Jonburi districts.



The Governor of Chantabun at first made friendly overtures to P'ya Taksin, but, on learning of the fall of Ayut'ia, he bethought himself that he might make a better King than the Chinese General, whom he therefore invited to Chantabun, intending to make a treacherous onslaught upon him. The design was revealed, and P'ya Taksin attacked Chantabun by night and captured it, after an action in which he greatly distinguished himself by his bravery. The capture of Chantabun took place in June 1767, two months after the fall of Ayut'ia, and was followed by the capture of Trat. P'ya Taksin thus became master of a large strip of territory, and territory which had not been plundered and depopulated by the Burmese. Officials and soldiers from other parts of Siam now began to join him, and by October of the same year his army of five hundred had increased to five thousand, and he felt strong enough to attack the Burmese.

With a fleet of a hundred boats he sailed up the Menam River and speedily took T'anabari (Bangkok), where he executed Nai T'ong In, a renegade Siamese who had been set up by the Burmese as Governor. Sugyi now sent a large army, under one Maung Ya, to expel P'ya Taksin. Maung Ya's force was, however, partly composed of Siamese, who at once began to desert, and Maung Ya fled back to the camp of the Three Bo Trees. P'ya Taksin pursued him and attacked the Burmese camp, which was taken after a short but fierce fight, the Burmese General being killed in action. This event marks the liberation of Siam from the Burmese, only six months after the capture and destruction of the capital.

A good many members of the Royal Family were still living at Ayut'ia. P'ya Taksin treated them with great

respect, and later provided for several of the Princesses by marrying them himself. The subsequent fate of two of these ladies was an unhappy one. They were accused of adultery and executed.

The remains of King Ekat'at were exhumed from the place where they had been buried by the Burmese, and cremated with all possible ceremony.

But P'ya Taksin, while prepared to show proper respect to the members of the ex-Royal Family, whether living or dead, had no idea of placing any one of them on the throne. He set to work to render himself popular by distributing money and food to the population, and it soon became known that he intended to make himself King.

P'ya Taksin at first intended to re-establish Ayut'ia as the capital of Siam, but later changed his mind and returned to Bangkok,<sup>1</sup> where he was crowned as King of Siam. His decision was a wise one. To restore Ayut'ia would have cost a great deal of money, and to defend it would have needed a large army, neither of which the ruined land could at that time provide.

P'ya Taksin, at the time of his coronation, was only thirty-four years of age. His father was Chinese, or partly Chinese, and his mother Siamese. They were not people of any high position. P'ya Taksin rose to be King through his own courage and ability; perhaps partly, also, through his faith in his destiny, which was a prominent feature of his character throughout his career. He believed that even the forces of Nature were under his control when he was destined to succeed, and this faith led him to attempt and achieve tasks

<sup>1</sup> The city of King Taksin was on the west bank of the Menam, and is usually referred to by Siamese writers as T'onburi or T'anaburi. Chao P'ya Chakri, on becoming King, founded the present city of Bangkok. To the average European mind the distinction between T'anaburi and Bangkok is a distinction without a difference.

which to another man would have seemed impossible. Like Napoleon III, he was a man of destiny.

Fortunately for King Taksin the Burmese were fully occupied, at the end of 1767, in repelling a Chinese invasion, and he had, therefore, less to fear from them than from rivals in his own country. Siam was, at this time, split up into five separate States, namely :

1. Central Siam, under King Taksin, consisting of the modern provinces of Bangkok, Ratburi, Nak'on Jaisi, Prachin, Chantabun, and part of Nak'on Sawan.

2. The Peninsular provinces up to Jump'orn. One P'ra Palat, who was acting Governor of Nak'on Srit'ammarat at the time of the capture of Ayut'ia by the Burmese, had proclaimed his independence under the title of King Musika.

3. The eastern provinces, including K'orat. Prince T'ep P'ip'it, the restless son of King Boromakot, after many vicissitudes and dangers, had set himself up as King, with his capital at P'imai.

4. The province of P'itsanulok, and part of Nak'on Sawan, under the Governor of P'itsanulok, known as King Ruang.

5. The extreme northern part of P'itsanulok, where a Buddhist priest named Ruan had set himself up as King, with his capital at Sawangburi, near Utaradit (then known as Fang). He was known as the Priest-King of Fang, and all his officials and army leaders wore the yellow robe.

Every one of these rulers held great advantages over King Taksin. The Governors of P'itsanulok and Nak'on Srit'ammarat had merely exalted their titles in districts already under their rule, and whose inhabitants were accustomed to obey them. Prince T'ep P'ip'it could plead hereditary right. The Priest-King of Fang

was looked upon by the superstitious—and everyone was superstitious in those days—as a prophet or magician, or both. P'ya Taksin had nothing but his courage and his faith in his destiny, yet he subdued all his rivals.

The Burmese still had a camp near Ratburi, and a fleet of boats at the mouth of the Mek'long River. Early in 1768 the King of Burma, having expelled the Chinese invaders from his realm, ordered the Burmese Governor of Tavoy to join forces with the Burmese at Ratburi and make short work of the upstart King of Bangkok. King Mengra quickly learnt that he was dealing with an adversary very different from King Ekat'at. The Governor of Tavoy was expelled from Siam with great loss, the Burmese camp at Ratburi was captured, and the whole of their fleet fell into the hands of the Siamese. A prominent part in these operations was taken by one P'ra Maha Montri. This official was one of the earliest adherents of King Taksin. After the recapture of Ayut'ia he had introduced into the King's service his elder brother, Luang Yokrabat, who was made P'ra Rajawarin, and who later became King P'ra P'utt'a Yot Fa Chulalok (Rama I) of Siam; and P'ra Maha Montri was the Wang Na, or "second King," during his brother's reign.

✓ In May 1768 King Taksin marched northwards to subdue the Governor of P'itsanulok. The expedition was a failure. The King's army sustained a defeat, and he himself was wounded. The reduction of P'itsanulok was, therefore, abandoned for a time.

Encouraged by this success, the Governor of P'itsanulok caused himself to be formally crowned as King of Siam. He did not, however, long enjoy his new dignity. A week later he was dead. He was succeeded by his younger brother, P'ra In, who

took King Ruang's death as an omen, and did not assume the Royal title.

The Priest-King of Fang, who had already made one unsuccessful attack on P'itsanulok, now seized the opportunity for another attempt. After a siege of two months he was master of P'itsanulok. The unfortunate P'ra In was executed and his corpse exposed on the gate of the city, and the Priest-King of Fang became ruler of the whole of northern Siam.

The yellow robe worn by this abominable man was the only religious thing about him. His rule was a disgrace to humanity and an insult to the religion which he sacrilegiously professed to follow. He and his followers wallowed in blood and steeped themselves in drunkenness and vice. Fortunately their triumph was not destined to endure for very long.

At the close of the rainy season of 1768 King Taksin turned his attention to the K'orat district. The army of Prince T'ep P'ip'it was assisted by a Burmese force, under Maung Ya, who had fled from Ayut'ia when it was recaptured the previous year; after two stiff encounters the K'orat armies were overcome, Maung Ya and his Siamese colleague were captured and executed, and K'orat was occupied. The "King of P'imai," as Prince T'ep P'ip'it was called, took no part in the fighting, and when he heard of the defeat of his armies, he fled from P'imai, intending to seek a refuge at Wiengchan. He was pursued and taken. King Taksin, who always showed respect to scions of the former reigning family, intended to treat him well, but the insolence and arrogance of the Prince towards his captor were such as to stifle all feelings of mercy, and Prince T'ep P'ip'it met the usual fate of unsuccessful pretenders.

This Prince, by virtue of his birth, was a suitable

candidate for the throne of Siam; he had, however, no military or administrative ability, and throughout his career was nothing more than a mere plotter and intriguer. He was better out of the way.

King Taksin now began to restore order and prosperity in his dominions. His was no easy task. The crops had not been properly attended to for several years, and at the end of 1768 the scanty supplies were further diminished by a plague of rats. A huge rat-catching campaign had to be undertaken, and at the same time the starving people had to be fed. Money was poured out without stint to obtain supplies from abroad, and people soon began to see that a usurper, who was capable of helping them in an emergency, was better than a ruler of Royal descent who wasted his time in folly and idleness. Abuses were reformed, the safety of persons and property was restored, and malefactors were punished with the greatest severity.

Early in 1769 the King of Cambodia, Rama T'ibodi, was expelled from his Kingdom by his brother, aided by a Cochin-Chinese army. King Rama T'ibodi fled to Bangkok, and his brother assumed the title of King Narai Raja. King Taksin thought this a suitable opportunity for asserting the ancient rights of Siam over Cambodia. He therefore demanded from the new ruler the usual tribute, in the form of gold and silver trees. King Narai returned a haughty answer, declining to send tribute to the son of a low-born Chinese. King Taksin was just getting ready to march against Nak'on Srit'amarat, but this insult was more than he could brook. Siemrap and Battambang were promptly occupied by two armies which had been stationed at K'orat, and orders were given to hold those two towns until the return of the army sent to Nak'on Srit'amarat. If the

King of Cambodia had not, by that time, adopted a humbler tone, more of his territory was to be seized.

The expedition to Nak'on Srit'ammarat began badly. The army met with a reverse near Jaiya, and the Generals started quarrelling and indulging in mutual recriminations. The King hurried to Jaiya by sea, arriving in August. His presence at once set matters right. The army of King Musika was routed, and he himself fled to Nak'on Srit'ammarat. When King Taksin's army approached the walls of the city, King Musika gave up all hope, and escaped to the south. King Taksin entered the city in state. The fugitive Governor was followed to Patani. A threat of war caused the Raja of that State to deliver him up, and he was sent back to Nak'on Srit'ammarat.

King Taksin's treatment of his defeated rival shows the generous side of his character. His councillors urged the execution of the prisoner. "No," replied the King; "he was never my servant, nor I his master. We were both servants of King Ekathat, and when our master was dead, neither of us had any better right than the other to set himself up as King. My luck has been better than his, that is all." The ex-Governor was taken to Bangkok and given an official appointment, and a few years later was sent back to govern Nak'on Srit'ammarat.

King Taksin was delayed at Nak'on Srit'ammarat for longer than he had expected, and did not return to Bangkok until March 1769. A rumour was spread that he was dead, and the armies from Siemrap and Battambang had returned before the King, the Generals in command fearing that there might be disturbances in the capital. Cambodia was therefore left alone that year.

Early in 1770 the Priest-King of Fang sent a band of marauders to plunder the town of Jainat, and King Taksin realised that the time had come to bring the false prophet to book. Three armies, totalling over 20,000 men, were employed on this expedition, and they made very short work of the northern forces. P'itsanulok was soon taken, and after a brief delay there the army of the future Wang Na (at that time bearing the title of P'ya Yomarat) invested the capital of the Priest-King, Sawangburi. This was only a small town, surrounded by a wooden stockade. The prophet soon lost heart, and when a young white elephant was born in his city, he took it as an omen of coming disaster to himself, and fled away to the north. He was never captured, and his ultimate fate is unknown.

The capture of Sawangburi meant the re-establishment of the old territorial limits of Siam, and thenceforth King Taksin ruled over practically the same territory as the later Kings of Ayut'ia, with the exception of Tavoy and Tenasserim.

The King was, as might be expected, greatly disgusted by the excesses and immoralities of the false prophet and his myrmidons. He held that every priest in northern Siam lay under the suspicion of being a participator in the crimes that had been committed, and compelled large numbers of them to undergo the ordeal by water. Those who could not withstand this test were expelled from the priesthood and punished. A thorough reformation of the Church in the northern provinces was then undertaken by priests sent up from the south.

It may here be mentioned that King Taksin was unusually partial to the system of trial by ordeal, whether by fire or water, and constantly made use of it in doubtful cases. This was quite in accordance with his character.



for he firmly believed that all his actions were directly influenced and controlled by a higher Power.

We may assume that King Taksin had by this time realised a fact, which seems to have escaped the notice of most of his predecessors, namely that there never could be any security for the peace and prosperity of Siam so long as the Lao States, which had formed the ancient Kingdom of Lannat'ai, remained under Burmese rule.

We have seen in the last chapter that the Burmese, since the rise of their new dynasty, had adopted more ruthless methods of warfare. It seems that their methods of governing subject races had likewise become less sympathetic. The Lao States had been, off and on, under Burmese rule for over two hundred years, and do not appear to have felt the yoke bear very heavily upon them. But under the new Burmese Military Governors things were quite different. We read in the *History of Chiangmai* that "the Burmese rulers in every part of Lannat'ai oppressed and ill-treated the people in many ways, and the people suffered very grievously. Some fled and dwelt in the forests and jungles, and some formed themselves into robber bands and fought together."

The Burmese Governor, Ap'ai Kamini, died in 1769 and was succeeded by a man named Bo Mayu Nguan, who signalled his assumption of office by sending an expedition to attack Sawank'alok. The Governor of Sawank'alok held out for a month, at the end of which time a large army from P'itsanulok arrived, and drove the Burmese back across the frontier.

King Taksin then assumed command in person, and made up his mind to capture Chiangmai. He reached Chiangmai without much opposition, and we may

presume that the Lao population welcomed him as a deliverer. On reaching Chiengmai, however, he realised that he was not equipped to undertake a long siege, and retired after remaining near the city for nine days. He gave as his reason for this retirement an ancient prophecy to the effect that no King of Siam could ever capture Chiengmai on the first attempt.

The Burmese attacked the retreating army, but were driven back with much loss, the King himself showing great courage in this action.

King Narai of Cambodia, true to the tradition of his ancestors, who had always sought to trouble Siam when she was at war with Burma, took advantage of the King of Siam's absence at Chiengmai to send a filibustering expedition to attack Chaniabun and Trat. This stab in the back made King Taksin determine to dethrone the culprit, and put his fugitive rival, Rama T'ibodi, in his place. He therefore at once invaded Cambodia at the head of an army of 15,000 men, backed by a fleet of 200 vessels. Bantéay M'eu, Phnom Penh, Battambang, and Boribun were speedily captured, and the Siamese advanced towards Bantéay Pech,<sup>1</sup> at that time the capital. King Narai fled, and King Rama T'ibodi was set up as vassal King of Cambodia. King Narai retained control of northern Cambodia for a time, but ultimately submitted to his brother and was rewarded by King Taksin with the title of Maha Upayorat, or vice-King.

The future founder of the present dynasty greatly distinguished himself in this campaign. He had recently been promoted to the rank and title of Chao P'ya Chakri, and his younger brother had become Chao P'ya Surasih.

<sup>1</sup> About five miles north-east of Phnom Penh.

In 1769 the third Chinese invasion of Burma since the accession of King Mengra had been successfully repulsed, and peace between Burma and the Chinese formally concluded. This left Burma free for further aggressions against her eastern neighbours. In 1771 an army under a celebrated General named Bo Supla was sent to interfere in a dispute between the Princes of Wiengchan and Luang P'rabang, on the invitation of the former. Luang P'rabang submitted without any fighting, leaving this army free to molest Siam. In 1772 a small force was sent to capture P'ijai, but was driven back. At the end of 1773 Bo Supla himself led an army to attack P'ijai again. This time the Siamese were ready, and after a very fierce engagement drove the whole Burmese army back across the frontier.

In 1774 King Mengra was busy making preparations for dealing a final blow at Siam. His plan was to make, as in 1767, a double invasion from Chiengmai and the west simultaneously. King Taksin was getting ready to defend his new capital when he heard that a rebellion had broken out in Pegu and that the rebels had taken Martaban. He therefore determined to take the initiative, realising that if he wished to unite the Lao States to his Kingdom he must do it now or never. In November 1774 he marched to the north at the head of 20,000 men. On reaching Raheng he heard the disquieting news that the Peguan rebels had been quelled. For a brief space he hesitated. But if the news from Burma was bad, that from Chiengmai was very encouraging. The Burmese Governor was at loggerheads with Bo Supla, and P'ya Chaban, a man of great influence, had quarrelled with them both. Lampang was known to

<sup>1</sup> This was the General who took command of the Burmese army after the death of Maha Nohrata, and was responsible for the capture of Ayut'ia and subsequent

be a centre of anti-Burmese feeling. The Governor of that city, Chao Fa Jai Keo,<sup>1</sup> appointed by the Burmese in 1764, was under suspicion, and was retained as a hostage in Chiengmai. His son, Chao Kawila, the acting Governor, was known to be pro-Siamese. King Taksin was therefore emboldened to proceed with his enterprise.

Hardly had the Siamese advance guard, under Chao P'ya Chakri, crossed the frontier, when P'ya Chaban, who had been sent to M'uang Hawt at the head of a mixed Burmese and Lao force, caused all his Burmese followers to be killed, and proceeded to join the Siamese. Chao Kawila of Lampang followed suit by ordering a massacre of all the Burmese in his city, and throwing open the gates to the Siamese army. Such of the Burmese as could escape bore the news to Chiengmai; the Burmese Governor of Chiengmai, Bo Mayu Nguan, retaliated by casting Chao Fa Jai Keo, the arch-rebel's father, into prison.

By January 1775 the Burmese had been driven, with great slaughter, from their camp near Lamp'un and the armies of King Taksin were, for the second time, besieging Chiengmai. The King himself was quickly on the spot, and ordered a general attack on every side. Bo Mayu Nguan and Bo Supla, with the greater part of the Burmese garrison, fled through the White Elephant Gate. They were pursued, but managed to make good their escape. King Taksin entered Chiengmai in state on the 16th of January, 1775, amidst general rejoicing. The happiest man of all was Chao Kawila, who had the satisfaction of releasing his old father, given up for dead.

<sup>1</sup> Chao Fa Jai Keo was the ancestor of the present hereditary Chiefs of Chiengmai, Lampang, and Lamp'un.

P'ya Chaban was made Prince of Chiengmai, with the title of P'ya Wijien, and Chao Kawila was sent back to rule Lampang.<sup>1</sup>

The capture of Chiengmai practically marks the establishment of the Kingdom of Siam as known to us to-day. It was speedily followed by the submission of the Chiefs of P're and Nan.

Any chance of peace between Siam and Burma which might have existed was destroyed as a result of the rebellion in Pegu.<sup>2</sup> Thousands of Peguan refugees fled across the frontier into Siam, and each band of refugees was in turn followed by a Burmese force, sent to bring them back. Two of these Burmese incursions into the Raheng district were repulsed during and after the siege of Chiengmai. On returning to his capital in February 1775 King Taksin was greeted by the tidings that yet a third Burmese force had crossed the frontier by the Three Pagodas route, and had driven back the Siamese frontier guard to Kanburi. He at once gave orders that the troops which were returning from Chiengmai were to proceed at once to Ratburi, and that no man was to waste time by going home to see his wife or relations. Only one man, P'ra T'ep Yot'a, ventured to disobey this order. The King sent for him, and with his own hand cut off his head. After that, the rest of the army made no further trouble about going to Ratburi.

The Burmese, encouraged by their first success, pushed on into Siam. One force, consisting of 2,000 men, advanced towards Sup'an and Nak'on Jaisi, pillaging and plundering; another, 3,000 strong, was despatched towards Ratburi. The result was a complete defeat.

<sup>1</sup> P'ya Chaban was only Chief of Chiengmai for about a year, after which the city was deserted for twenty years, until 1796, when Chao Kawila became Prince.

<sup>2</sup> This rebellion in Pegu had unfortunate results for the ex-King of Pegu, P'ya Dala, who had been a prisoner since 1757. He was accused of complicity, and was executed, together with several members of his family.

The larger of the Burmese armies was besieged by King Taksin in a camp which they established near Ratburi. In April, after heavy losses and much suffering, they were forced to surrender, and their General, with 1,328 starving men, was taken as a prisoner to Bangkok. The smaller Burmese army managed to make good its escape, but only after suffering severe losses. The sight of such a large number of Burmese prisoners must have had a very good effect on the *morale* of the people of Bangkok. Hitherto they had become too much accustomed to seeing their own friends and relations carried off to Burma.

Chiengsen was still in the hands of the Burmese, and, in October 1775, Bo Supla came down once more to recapture Chiengmai. That city was very short both of men and supplies, and could not have held out for long. But the news that Chao P'ya Chakri and Chao P'ya Surasih were on their way to relieve Chiengmai caused Bo Supla to retire again to Chiengsen.

Chao P'ya Chakri and Chao P'ya Surasih had not been long in the north when they had to hurry back to assist in dealing with the most serious Burmese invasion during King Taksin's reign. This invasion had as its object the reduction of the northern provinces of Siam. The Burmese army was commanded by a celebrated General called Maha Sihapura, who had been very successful in the Chinese wars. The frontier was crossed at Melamac, Raheng was captured, and in January 1776 a considerable Siamese army under Chao P'ya Surasih was defeated near Suk'ot'ai and driven back to P'itsanulok. After this, Suk'ot'ai fell and the Burmese started to besiege P'itsanulok. King Taksin himself led another army to the relief of the northern capital, and a good deal of hard fighting took place, but in the end Chao P'ya

Chakri, menaced by famine, was forced to abandon P'itsanulok. At the head of all the inhabitants who were still able to march, he forced a way through the Burmese lines and established himself at P'etchabun. The Burmese entered the deserted city at the end of March. The capture of P'itsanulok marked the high tide of Burmese success. The shortage of supplies, which had hastened the fall of the city, made it impossible to hold it, and the invaders speedily withdrew. From this time they suffered defeat after defeat, and by the end of August had retired across the frontier.

It is related that during this invasion Maha Sihasura expressed a desire to meet Chao P'ya Chakri, whom he had found to be the toughest of his antagonists. A meeting was arranged, and the Burmese General, himself a very old man, was astonished to find that Chao P'ya Chakri was only thirty-nine years of age, and looked much less. Maha Sihasura prophesied that Chao P'ya Chakri was destined to wear a crown—a prophecy which came true only six years later.

The Burmese retreat from P'itsanulok was not entirely involuntary. A new King, Singu Min, son of Meng-ra, had just ascended the throne of Burma. He was opposed to adventures in Siam, and one of his first acts was to degrade Maha Sihasura. He intended, however, to maintain his control over the whole of the Burmese Empire, of which, according to Burmese ideas, the Lao States formed an essential part. An army of 6,000 men was therefore sent to Chiengmai. P'ya Chaban was reduced to such straits that he was forced to feed his soldiers and citizens mainly on the flesh of Burmese prisoners. He managed, however, to hold out, and in September 1776 the city was relieved by a Siamese army. P'ya Chaban, however, felt unable to carry on the

government of Chiangmai any longer, so depleted and improverished had the city become. He retired to Lampang, followed by most of the inhabitants of Chiangmai, and for twenty years the once mighty capital of King Mengrai was left as a lair for the beasts of the jungle.

King Taksin had no more trouble with Burma during the rest of his reign, but plenty of it on his eastern frontier. In 1777 the Governor of Nangrong, in K'orat province, rebelled, and threw in his lot with one Chao O, who ruled over Champasak, at that time an independent principality. Chao P'ya Chakri was sent to deal with the rebel, who was quickly caught and executed; but this led to hostilities with Champasak, and another army, under Chao P'ya Surasih, had to be sent to the east. The result was very satisfactory. Chao O was caught and executed, and all the territory on the bank of the Mek'ong, as far south as K'ong, was added to King Taksin's dominions.

Chao P'ya Chakri, on returning from this expedition, was given the rank of a Royal Prince, with a title which may be translated as "Supreme Warlord."

About this time King Taksin began to show signs of mental derangement. He imagined that he had discovered certain physical resemblances between himself and Buddha, and indulged in various other eccentricities. His temper also grew very fierce and suspicious. On one occasion he was roused to fury merely because his hair had been imperfectly dressed on a ceremonial occasion, and when his son, Prince In P'itak, ventured to say a word in defence of the offending servant, the unfortunate Prince was seized and most unmercifully flogged.

<sup>1</sup> It was most unusual to confer princely rank on any person not related to the reigning King. The only previous instance recorded was that of K'un P'iren (later King Maha T'ammaraaja), who in 1541 was made a Prince by King Maha Chakrap'at. He was, however, the King's cousin, and was a descendant of the Kings of Sab'ot'ai.



The Champasak expedition was the indirect cause of another war, this time with Prince Bun Sarn of Wiengchan. A certain Wiengchan noble, named P'ra Woh, who had rebelled some time previously against the Prince of Wiengchan, had fled to Champasak territory and established himself at a place named Mot Deng, near the present town of Ubon. On the fall of Champasak, he made formal submission to Siam, but as soon as the Siamese army was withdrawn, the Prince of Wiengchan attacked P'ra Woh, captured him, and cut his head off. King Taksin regarded this as an act of war against himself, and at once fitted out an army of 20,000 men to invade Wiengchan. The Prince of Luang P'rabang, Chao Suriwongsa, joined the Siamese, but in spite of his assistance, it was several months before Wiengchan was captured. The Siamese appear to have rivalled the Burmese in "frightfulness" during this expedition. When besieging the town of P'ak'o' they terrified the inhabitants by sending women to offer boatloads of severed heads for sale outside the city wall, and when at last Wiengchan was captured, they looted everything of value on which they could lay their hands. Among the plunder taken was the celebrated Emerald Buddha.<sup>2</sup> From this time until 1893 Luang P'rabang and Wiengchan were Siamese dependencies.

The arrangements made by King Taksin in Cambodia, which practically amounted to placing the country under the joint rule of two rival Kings, were not very successful. In 1777 the Maha Uparat was murdered, and the ex-King Narai died shortly afterwards. King Rama Raja was suspected of being the cause of the death of both

<sup>1</sup> Close to Wiengchan.

<sup>2</sup> According to one legend, this image had at one time been at Ayut'ia, during the reign of Boromeraja II. There is, however, no real historical evidence that it was ever in southern Siam until it was taken to Bangkok by Chao P'ya Chakri.

these Princes, and his unpopularity was enhanced by the assistance, both of men and provisions, which he forced his people to render to the Siamese expedition against Wiengchan. Disturbances broke out, ending in the execution of King Rama Raja and his four sons, and Prince Ong Eng, the seven-year-old son of the ex-King Narai, was set up as King, under the guardianship of a certain Prince Talaha. The infant King was merely a puppet of the anti-Siamese party in Cambodia, and King Taksin thought the occasion favourable to increase Siamese control. Early in 1781 an army of 20,000 men, under Chao P'ya Chakri and Chao P'ya Surasih, was sent to Cambodia. They were accompanied by the King's son, Prince In P'itak, who was to be crowned as King of Cambodia, when the country had been subdued. The Regent of Cambodia fled from his capital, Bantéay Pech, and went to Saigon to ask for the aid of a Cochinchinese army. Prince In P'itak occupied Bantéay Pech, and a Cochinchinese army advanced to Phnom Penh, but before any serious fighting took place Chao P'ya Chakri received news of grave events which made him decide to hurry back to Bangkok.

After the departure of the army for Cambodia, King Taksin's eccentricities had become more pronounced. He imagined that he was developing into a Buddha, and commanded the priests to pay him divine honours. Some, through fear, assented, but many refused. These, to the number of over five hundred, were cruelly flogged, and the head priests among them were degraded and imprisoned.

The laity suffered still more severely. As has before been explained, the export trade of Siam was at that time a Government monopoly. The King began to suspect everybody of carrying on illicit trade. As he accepted

the sworn statement of a single person as conclusive evidence of this, a detestable band of informers soon grew up, who waxed rich on fines extorted from their victims. The latter were not only plundered, but often flogged to death. Burning people alive became a common event. One of the King's own wives was consigned to the flames on a charge of stealing money from the treasury.<sup>1</sup> On every side were heard the lamentations of innocent victims, groaning under the insensate tyranny of a madman.

Ayut'ia was at that time a sort of mining camp, chiefly populated by people engaged in digging for the treasures which had been hidden during the siege. The superintendence of this business had been farmed out to a man called P'ra Wijit Narong for four thousand *ticals* a year, and in order to make a profit, he had to be pretty hard on the diggers; the latter were about ripe for rebellion when, in March 1782, one Nai Bunnak set up the standard of revolt near Ayut'ia, proclaiming his intention of killing King Taksin and setting Chao P'ya Chakri on the throne. By the end of March, Ayut'ia was in the hands of the rebels, the detested treasure farmer had been killed, and the Governor of Ayut'ia had fled to Bangkok.

Among the ringleaders of the rebels was a certain K'un Keo, the younger brother of an official called P'ya Sank'aburi. King Taksin, who at first thought that he had only to deal with a band of dacoits, sent up P'ya Sank'aburi with a small force to arrest the offenders. P'ya Sank'aburi, on reaching Ayut'ia, at once threw in his lot with his brother, and was made the leader of the rebels. The rebel army now marched to Bangkok without opposition, and on the 30th of March King Taksin

<sup>1</sup> The lady was entirely innocent. The missing money, which had merely been mislaid, was discovered in the Treasury after the accession of Chao P'ya  
P'ya

found himself besieged in his own palace. Firing took place throughout the night, but in the morning the King, with the same fatalistic spirit which had often led him to overcome almost unsurmountable obstacles, decided that his hour of destiny had sounded, and surrendered to P'ya Sank'aburi, offering to abdicate and assume the yellow robe, on the one condition that his life should be spared. A couple of days later he was admitted into the ranks of that priesthood whose members he had, in his madness, so grievously ill-treated.

P'ya Sank'aburi now assumed the direction of affairs. He began by releasing all the prisoners in the gaol, and this step was followed by a general massacre of all those persons who had set themselves up as informers.

The Governor of K'orat, P'ya Suriya Ap'ai, had sent post-haste, on the outbreak of the rebellion, to inform Chao P'ya Chakri, who was then at Siemrap. In reply, he received orders to proceed at once to Bangkok with all the troops he could raise, and hold the capital until the arrival of Chao P'ya Chakri himself. He arrived at Bangkok in the middle of April, and was well received by P'ya Sank'aburi, who still expressed the intention of placing Chao P'ya Chakri on the throne. Before long, however, it became evident that P'ya Sank'aburi's ambition had overcome his scruples, and that he intended to make himself King. He began to rifle the Treasury, and to distribute largess broadcast, so as to gain supporters. He then released from prison a nephew of the King's, Prince Anurak Songk'ram, and provided him with troops to attack the army of P'ya Suriya Ap'ai. Prince Anurak burnt down a great part of the city, but when it came to fighting he was badly beaten. He himself fell into the hands of P'ya Suriya, and about half of his troops joined the victor.

P'ya Sank'aburi now saw that his cause was hopeless, and that the only thing to do was to make the best terms he could with Chao P'ya Chakri.

Chao P'ya Chakri arrived at Bangkok, with a large force, on April 20th. The populace, filled with joy at the prospect of a just and settled government, flocked to meet him, and he entered the city in state amidst general jubilation. All the officials thronged to do him homage, among them P'ya Sank'aburi and the members of his party.

The presence of King Taksin was extremely embarrassing; he was incapable of governing, yet he had many adherents in various parts of the country who might be expected to grasp the first opportunity of replacing him on the throne. Cambodia was still disturbed, and a Burmese invasion was thought to be imminent. To ensure the internal tranquillity of the country, all the principal officials urged Chao P'ya Chakri to agree to the death of the ex-King; he finally accepted their counsel, and King Taksin was executed.

The false P'ya Sank'aburi and his chief adherents met with the same fate.

Thus perished, at the age of forty-eight, one of the most remarkable men who ever wore the crown of Siam.

In 1767 he was a mere guerilla leader, with only five hundred followers. When he was executed, only fifteen years later, his dominions embraced the whole of the former Kingdom of Ayut'ia with the exception of Tavoy and Tenasserim, and he was suzerain over almost all the Lao States, including Luang P'rabang. Perhaps no man but one with the germ of madness in his brain would have set himself such a task as that which King Taksin undertook and accomplished.

Chao P'ya Chakri was at once proclaimed King of Siam, with the title of King Rama T'ibodi.

## SUPPLEMENT

KING RAMA I of the present dynasty, or P'ra P'utt'a. Yot Fa Chulalok, shortly after ascending the throne, founded the present city of Bangkok, bringing down part of the walls and fortifications of Ayut'ia to be used in the construction of his new capital.

This King collected and revised the Laws of Siam, and had them put into the form which many of them retain until the present day.

There was constant trouble with Burma during his reign. King Bodawpaya, who seized the throne of Burma in 1781, was very anxious to subjugate Siam, and in 1785 Burmese troops crossed the frontier at no less than nine separate points. The Burmese met with some initial successes, and overran part of the Peninsula, but were ultimately all driven out of the country. The Siamese took the opportunity, after expelling the Burmese from the Peninsula, to regain their control over the Malay States of Kedah and Patani, and even to extend it over Kelantan and Trengganu, which had not previously been subject to Siam.

During these operations the Sultan of Kedah, fearing a Siamese attack, leased the island of Penang to the East India Company. The exact degree of control exercised by Siam over Kedah before the fall of Ayut'ia is a matter concerning which authorities differ, but since the establishment of the capital at Bangkok, Kedah had been more or less independent. There is no record of any

protest having been made by Siam to the cession of Penang, and in 1800 Province Wellesley, on the mainland, was likewise ceded by the Sultan of Kedah, again without protest from Siam.

The lease of Penang was a very one-sided bargain. The Sultan of Kedah expected, in return, a Treaty guaranteeing his independence, but the East India Company declined to bind themselves in any way.

In 1786 another Burmese invasion of Siam was repulsed, after a severe battle in the Kanburi district. In 1787 the Burmese, who still held Chiengsen and Chiengrai, attacked Lampang and Pasang (then the capital of Prince Kawila, who had not yet established himself at Chiangmai) but were defeated by the Laos, assisted by an army under the Maha Uparat of Siam.

In 1787 the Siamese took the offensive, and attacked Tavoy, but failed to take it. The Governor of Tavoy, however, rebelled against the King of Burma in 1791, and threw in his lot with Siam. This led to another war in 1793. On this occasion the Siamese attempted to invade Burma, but without much success, and Tavoy was recaptured by the Burmese. It has not formed a part of Siamese dominions since that time.

In 1797 the Burmese made another attack on the Lao Provinces. They reached Chiangmai, which had been re-established by Prince Kawila as his capital in 1796, but were driven back to Chiengsen. In 1802 the Burmese were at last expelled from Chiengsen, their last remaining stronghold in northern Siam. Chiengsen was depopulated and reduced to ruins, and has never since recovered its former important position.

During the reign of King Rama I, Siamese control over Luang Prabang and Cambodia was more or less acknowledged.

King Rama I died on the 7th of December, 1806, aged seventy-two. His younger brother, the Maha Uparat or "Second King," had died in 1803, and he was succeeded by his son, Prince Isara Sunt'orn, now known as King Rama II.<sup>1</sup>

King Rama II was born on February 26th, 1768, and was, therefore, forty-one years of age when he became King. He had had great experience both in administrative and military matters, having for many years taken a prominent part in the Government, and having, since he was a small boy, accompanied his father on his campaigns. In 1810 the Burmese again invaded the Peninsula, captured the island of Puket, and besieged Jum'p'orn. An army of 20,000 men was sent against them, and they were expelled without great difficulty.

In 1811 King Rama II published a Decree absolutely forbidding the sale or consumption of opium. This Law does not appear ever to have been properly enforced, and in time became a dead letter.

In the following year (1812) Siamese troops were sent to Cambodia, the King of that country, P'ra Ut'ai Raja, having shown signs of disaffection. P'ra Ut'ai retired to Cochin-China, but was later restored.

About the same time the Raja of Kelantan, who had previously been subject to the Sultan of Trengganu, quarrelled with the latter, and asked leave to send the usual tribute of gold and silver trees to Bangkok. Kelantan was accordingly acknowledged as a separate tributary State, and placed under the control of the Governor of Nak'on Srit'ammarat, who at that time exercised the powers of a semi-independent Viceroy over the Siamese part of the Peninsula.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He is often called by the posthumous title of P'ra P'utt'a Loet La Nap'alai.

<sup>2</sup> In English official documents of the period, he is usually referred to as the Rajah of I' or.



In 1818 a Portuguese envoy, Carlos Maluel Silveira, came from Macao to Bangkok, and a Commercial Agreement was subsequently concluded between Portugal and Siam. Senhor Silveira later became the first resident Portuguese Consul in Siam. His position seems to have been a curious one. He bore the Siamese title of Luang, and Captain Burney reported in 1827 that the King of Siam had pronounced sentence of death upon him; he was, however, subsequently pardoned. In those days it would seem that "what with one consideration and another, a Consul's lot was not a happy one."

In 1819 war with Burma was once more imminent, but the Burmese were prevented from invading Siam owing to trouble on their western frontier. The Sultan of Kedah was found to have been intriguing with the Burmese. In 1821 Kedah was invaded by Siamese troops, and the Sultan fled to Penang. There was a very strong pro-Kedah feeling in Penang at that time, and it may perhaps be said that a slight amount of jealousy between Siam and her southern neighbours in regard to the Malay States, traceable to the events of 1821, persisted until the year 1909, when the States of Kedah, Kelantan, and Trengganu were ceded to Great Britain.

In 1822 Dr. John Crawford visited Bangkok as an envoy of the East India Company. He did not succeed in concluding any definite Treaty or Commercial Agreement with Siam. Nevertheless, from that time onwards British trade with Siam began to increase, and the first English resident merchant, James Hunter, settled at Bangkok shortly afterwards.

In 1824 the first Anglo-Burmese war broke out. Siam was approached by the British as a possible ally, and a Siamese army was actually equipped. There was, however, still a certain amount of ill-feeling and suspicion

between Great Britain and Siam, consequent upon the events in Kedah, and the Siamese took no serious part in the war, though they were, as nominal allies, included in the peace, signed on February 24th, 1826, whereby Great Britain acquired the Burmese Provinces of Arakan, Martaban, Tavoy, and Tenasserim.

King Rama II died on July 20th, 1824. He had not formally designated a successor, but it had been generally understood that Prince Maha Mongkut, his eldest son by a royal mother, was to succeed him. The Prince, then aged twenty, was at the time of his father's death a member of the Buddhist priesthood. The eldest son of the King, Prince Jett'a, though not the son of a royal mother, was supported by a strong party, as he had for many years taken a prominent part in public affairs, and was thirty-seven years old. He was proclaimed King without any opposition. He is known as King Rama III, or by the posthumous title of P'ra Nang Klao.

In 1826 Captain Henry Burney visited Bangkok and succeeded in concluding a Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between Siam and the East India Company. Captain Burney failed in one of the objects of his mission, namely to obtain the restoration of the Sultan of Kedah, but a clause was inserted in the Treaty guaranteeing the independence of Perak, and Siam undertook not to "go and molest" Kelantan and Trengganu.

The United States concluded a Treaty with Siam in 1833.

In 1838 the ex-Sultan of Kedah tried to regain control of that State by force. This resulted in another Siamese invasion of Kedah, which again led to rather strained relations between Siam and Great Britain.

King Rama III died on April 2nd, 1851. His reign was, on the whole, a somewhat unprogressive one. He was

succeeded by his younger half-brother, Maha Mongkut, who assumed the title of P'ra Chom Klao, and is now known as King Rama IV.

Rama IV was a very remarkable man. He spoke English fluently and wrote it with a great charm of style, and though in some respects he held firmly to old fashions and traditions, in all important matters he was always on the side of progress.

In 1852 the second Anglo-Burmese war broke out, and resulted in the annexation of Pegu and all southern Burma by Great Britain. Siam remained neutral, but later on became involved in the tangled intrigues between Burma and the Shan State of Kengtung (now in Chinese territory), as a result of which Siamese armies twice invaded the State of Kengtung, namely in 1852 and in 1853. Neither invasion was entirely successful.

In 1855 Sir John Bowring visited Bangkok and concluded a Treaty between Siam and Great Britain, parts of which are still in force. The principal features of this Treaty, and of a supplementary Agreement signed the following year, were the establishment of Consular Jurisdiction, the restriction of residence for British subjects, and the limitation of the import duties. British Consular Jurisdiction was practically abolished in northern Siam by the Treaty of 1883, and in the rest of the Kingdom by that of 1909, since which year British subjects enjoy full residential rights.

Similar Treaties were later entered into with most other foreign Powers, the last one, with Japan, being signed as late as 1898.

In 1867 Cambodia, which had been tributary to Siam for several hundred years, became a French Protectorate,

except the provinces of Battambang and Siemrap, which remained Siamese until 1907.

In 1868 (October 1st) King Rama IV died, and was succeeded by his son, King Chulalongkorn, who assumed the title of P'ra Chula Chom Klao, and is now known as Rama V.

The chief events of this long and memorable reign were the institution of posts, telegraphs, and railways, and the remodelling of the Courts of Justice and the whole system of administration on Western lines.

In 1893 difficulties arose with France, which resulted in the payment by Siam of an indemnity of 3,000,000 francs, and the cession of certain territory, including a portion of the State of Luang P'rabang. The rest of Luang P'rabang was ceded to France in 1907.

The greatest title to fame possessed by King Rama V was, without doubt, the abolition of slavery, which, after being gradually modified, was finally done away with in 1905. For this alone King Rama V deserves to bear the title of "Great," which has been applied in this book only to two other Kings of Siam, namely Ramk'ambheng of Suk'otai and Naresuen of Ayut'ia.

During the reign of King Rama V the office of Maha Uparat (called by Europeans the "Second King"), which had been retained from ancient times, was finally abolished on the death of the last Maha Uparat in 1885.

King Rama V died on October 24th, 1910, and was succeeded by his son, King Maha Vajiravudh, who assumed in 1911 the title of Rama VI.

King Rama VI was born on January 1st, 1881. During his reign he set himself to follow the path of progress trodden by his father and grandfather, and the high position now occupied by Siam among the nations of the world is sufficient proof of his success.

Siam entered the Great War on the side of the Allies in 1917, and a small but extremely efficient Expeditionary Force was sent to Europe. This step greatly strengthened the bonds of friendship between Siam and her neighbours, Great Britain and France.

Rama VI was educated in England, and was always a good friend to the British. He received from King George V the rank of General in the British army.

This King was the founder of the boy Scouts Association of Siam, and always took a great interest in the movement, which has met with great success, and has been very beneficial to the youth of the nation.

Rama VI was known not only in Siam, but also abroad, as a writer of great talent both in Siamese and English. His literary output exceeded sixty works, many of which are of permanent interest and value. He was, moreover a keen patron of the drama. He translated some of Shakespeare's works into Siamese, and was the author of several original comedies, which still are acted with great success.

This Sovereign was an unusually generous and kind-hearted man, and was much beloved by all those who came into close contact with him.

Towards the end of King Rama's reign new Treaties were concluded with the United States, France, Great Britain (the last in 1925), and all the other foreign Powers with interests in Siam, providing for the ultimate fiscal and judicial autonomy of the Kingdom. Siam is now, therefore, completely independent, and practically released from foreign control, direct or indirect.

King Rama VI died on November 26th, 1925. His only child was a daughter, born the day before his death. He was, therefore, succeeded by his youngest and only surviving full-brother, Prajadhipok, the present reigning monarch.

King Prajadhipok was born on November 8th, 1893. He married in 1918 a daughter of his uncle, Prince Svasti, but has, as yet, no offspring.

King Prajadhipok's reign, despite the financial and economic difficulties with which Siam, like the rest of the world, has had to contend, has been a period of constant development and progress. His Majesty's simple tastes and democratic ideas have greatly endeared him to his people, irrespective of class.

King Prajadhipok, from the beginning of his reign, had determined, when the time was ripe, to institute a system of representative Government into the country. When, therefore, in June 1932, certain military, naval and civil officials presented a demand for the establishment of a Constitution, His Majesty readily assented, and shortly afterwards signed a temporary Constitution, which was put into its permanent form in December of the same year.

A provisional National Assembly was called into being, to be superseded later on by a popularly elected Parliament. All adults of both sexes are to have a vote, but the election will be run on a system of indirect voting, that is to say, the voters will choose electors, who in turn will elect the representatives.

In April 1933 parts of the Constitution were temporarily suspended, and the Assembly was dissolved, but some three months later a new Cabinet assumed office, and the Assembly was reopened.

After the first General Election has been held, Siam will definitely take her place among the world's democracies. All those who wish her well will hope and pray that under her new form of Government she may continue to advance and prosper even more than she did under her former system of benevolent autocracy.



**TABLE SHOWING THE PALI FORM OF SOME OF THE NAMES OF  
PERSONS AND PLACES USED IN THIS BOOK**

*Names of Kings*

Sri Int'arat'itya	... ..	S'ri Indrāditya
Ramk'ambheng	... ..	Rāma Gāmbhēn
T'ammaraaja	... ..	Dharmarāja
Rama T'ibodi	... ..	Rāmādhipati
Ramesuen	... ..	Rāmes'vara
Boromaraaja	... ..	Paramarāja
Ram Raja	... ..	Rāmarāja
Int'araaja	... ..	Indarāja
Boroma Trailokanat	... ..	Paramatrailokanātha
Ratsada	... ..	Rashtā
P'rajairaja	... ..	Brah Jayarāja
Worawongsa	... ..	Varavams'a
Chakrap'at	... ..	Cakravarti
Mahin	... ..	Mahindra
Sri Sarap'et	... ..	S'ri Sarvajña
Naresuen	... ..	Nares'vara
Ekat'otsarot	... ..	Ekādas'aratha
Songt'am	... ..	Draṇ dharma
Jett'a	... ..	Jetttha
At'ityawong	... ..	Adityavams'a
Prasat Tong	... ..	Prāsād Dōn
Jai	... ..	Jaya
Sri Sut'ammaraaja	... ..	S'ri Sudharmarāja
Narai	... ..	Nārāyāna
P'etraja	... ..	Bedrāja (i.e. Vedarāja)
Boromakot	... ..	Paramakos'a
Ut'ump'on	... ..	Udumbara
Ekat'at	... ..	Ekādasa
P'umint'araaja	... ..	Bhūminderāja



*Kings of Present Dynasty*

P'ra P'utt'a Yot Fa Chulalok ....	Brah Buddha Yöt Fa Culalok
P'ra P'utt'a Loet La Nop'alai ....	Brah Buddha Loes Lā Navalayā
P'ra Nang Klao ....	Brah Nan Klau
Maha Mongkut ....	Mahāmankut
Chulalongkorn ....	Culalankarana

*Names of Princes and Princesses*

Promanujit Jinnorot ....	Paramānujita Zinorasa
Nak'on In ....	Nagara Indra
Suriwong ....	Suriyavams'a
Cham Tewi ....	Cāmadevi
At'itya ....	Āditya
Noh P'uttangkun ....	Einō Buddhānkura
Maha Tewi ....	Mahādevi
Jai Jett'a ....	JayaJettha
Sri Suda Chan ....	S'ri Sūtā Candra
Sri Sin ....	S'ri Silpā
Suriyot'ai ....	Suriyodaya
Mahin ....	Mahindra
T'ep Krasatri ....	Deb Krasatri (i. e. Devakshatri)
Sri Saowaraja ....	S'ri Sauvarājā
Sut'at ....	Sudars'ana
Saowap'ak ....	Sauvabhāgya
Ap'ai T'ot ....	Abhayadosha
Yot'a T'ip ....	Yodhādiya
Yot'a T'ep ....	Yodhādeva
Naren ....	Narendra
Ap'ai ....	Abhaya
Borommet ....	Parames'vara
Sena P'itak ....	Senāvidaksha
T'ep P'ip'it ....	Devavividha
In P'itak ....	Indravidaksha
Anurak ....	Anura'ha

*Names of Places*

Ayut'ia ....	Ayudhyā
Kamp'engp'et ....	Kāmbēñ Bejr (i. e. Vajra)
Nak'on Prato'm ....	Nagara Prathama
Sup'an ....	Suvarna
Int'aburi ....	Indapuri
P'itsanulok ....	Vishnuloka
Suk'ot'ai ....	Sukhodaya
Sawank'alok ....	Svargaloka
Nak'on Jaisi ....	Nagara Jaya S'ri
Chantabun ....	Candapura
Nak'on Srit'ammarat ....	Nagara S'ri Dhammarājā
P'etchabun ....	Bejra (i.e. Vajra) purna

*Names of certain Prominent Officials*

Maha Uparat ....	Mahā Uparāja
Chao P'ya Kalahom ....	Cau Brayā Kralāhoma
Chao P'ya Yomarat ....	Cau Brayā Yamarājā
Chao P'ya Surasih ....	Cau Brayā Surasiha
Chao P'ya Chakri ....	Cau Brayā Cakri
Chao P'ya Wijayen ....	Cau Brayā Vijayendra
P'ya Yut'it Tira ....	Brayā Yudhishtira
P'ya Sunt'orn Songk'ram ....	Brayā Sundara Sangrāma
P'ya P'rak'lang ....	Brayā Brah Glāñ
P'ya Kosa Tibodi ....	Brayā Kos'adhipati
P'ya Ram Dejo ....	Brayā Rāma Tejo
P'ya Senap'imuk ....	Brayā Senabhimukha
P'ya Sri Worawong ....	Brayā S'rivaravams'a
P'ya Kamp'engram ....	Brayā Kāmbēñ Rām
P'ya Rajabangsan ....	Brayā Rājavanāsan
P'ya Sank'aburi ....	Brayā Surgapuri
P'ra Wisut Sunt'orn ....	Brah Visūtra Sundara
P'ra Pi'jai Surin ....	Brah Vijaya Surindra
P'ra Maha Montri ....	Brah Mahāmantri
P'ra Rajawarin ....	Brah Rājavarindra
Luang Yokrabat ....	Hluan Yok'traparti

Luang Sarasak ....	Hluan Sāras'akti
Luang Prasoet ....	Hluan Prasoeth
K'un Jinarat ....	Khun Jinarāja
K'un P'iren ....	Khun Virendra

*Names of some of the Kings of Cambodia*

Lampongsaraja ....	Lambaṅs Rājān
Pasatr ....	Pāsatr
Kadom Bong ....	Katampōn
T'aunmasok ....	Dhamas'oka
Sadet ....	Sdec
Chandaraja ....	Candarāja
Satt'a ....	Sattha
Sri Sup'anma ....	S'ri Subarnamā

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